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THE TRAILING FRONTIER

SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE IN THE FAR FUTURE

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THE TRAILING FRONTIER

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INTRODUCTION

The Trailing Frontier lies directly to trailing of the Core. A natural border exists, in the form of a choke point between the end of the Lesser Rift and the Delphi Rift. This area is navigable but stars are sparse, creating an astrographic and more importantly economic barrier to Imperial expansion. Beyond the choke point is a region of strategic interest to the Imperium but one into which it is difficult to project power.

About half of the region known as the Trailing Frontier is Imperial territory. This lies in the Ley sector with a small enclave projecting rimward into the Glimmerdrift Reaches. Ley is the seat of the Imperial Archduke of Gateway, whose area of responsibility is named Gateway Domain despite it directly controlling no territory in Gateway. This reflects traditions based upon plans to expand into that region and the strategic importance of Gateway.

Gateway lies to trailing of Ley and, whilst it contains no Imperial worlds, the sector is of great strategic importance. This is due to the presence of the Lords of Thunder, a sect of K'Kree so militant they were driven out of the Two Thousand Worlds. The Lords of Thunder have expressly stated their intention to expand into and across Gateway and to wipe out all G'naak – meat-eaters, or 'vermin' – in the cosmos. Keeping the K'Kree away from the Imperial border is an important strategic aim for the Imperium but it has many other concerns. Plans to 'harden' the region against K'Kree expansion have rarely produced significant results and it may be that the measures taken by the archdukes of Gateway are far too little, far too late.

The region was settled by humans during the Rule of Man, with slow colony ships arriving even after the Long Night had descended upon the territory of the First and Second Imperium. These populations developed largely in isolation, sometimes interacting with each other or the local species. Those that did well eventually created starfaring civilisations which already had a long history of change and conflict when the Third Imperium arrived in the region.

The Trailing Frontier is thus an extremely varied region. Ley is solidly Imperial territory and has more of the feel of an internal sector than a frontier. Gateway sector on the other hand is open territory with numerous small powers. It is subject to external influences but these are for the most part distant. The people of Gateway want to chart their own paths but, ultimately, they are caught between the Imperium and the Lords of Thunder. If they can put aside their differences, they may be able to remain independent but, history has shown this to be a turbulent region. Subservience to an outside power might actually be preferable to alliance with an old enemy.

A HISTORY OF THE TRAILING FRONTIER

Astrographically, the Trailing Frontier consists of two sectors – Ley and Gateway – both containing a projection of the Lesser Rift. Ley includes part of the Delphi Rift, creating a choke point easily navigable by ships of jump-3 or greater capability only. Ley is almost entirely Imperial territory, whilst Gateway lies entirely outside the Imperium. Both sectors had a long history before the coming of the Imperium.

Human habitation in Gateway began around 300,000 years before the founding of the Third Imperium, when a race of non-human beings referred to as the Ancients transplanted genetically engineered human stock to various worlds throughout what is now known as Charted Space. Their purposes remain unknown, although it is generally accepted that groups of humans served the Ancients in some capacity. The Ancients vanished long ago, leaving only fleeting traces of their existence, but some of their transplanted populations remain.

THE DISTANT PAST

It is possible that several human groups were transplanted into Gateway. The expanding empires of successful groups may have absorbed the remnants of these populations. However, the fate of two such groups is known: The Luriani and Sydites. Both species underwent extensive genetic modification but can be identified as sub-species of Humaniti by their modified characteristics.

The Sydites got off to a slow start on their new homeworld of Sopater (now known as Khuur to Imperial citizens). Having been bred as tough and obedient workers, they were well suited to survival in low-technology conditions but had little drive to develop complex social systems or technology. The Sydites rose to dominate their planet but for millennia never advanced beyond the hunter-gatherer stage.

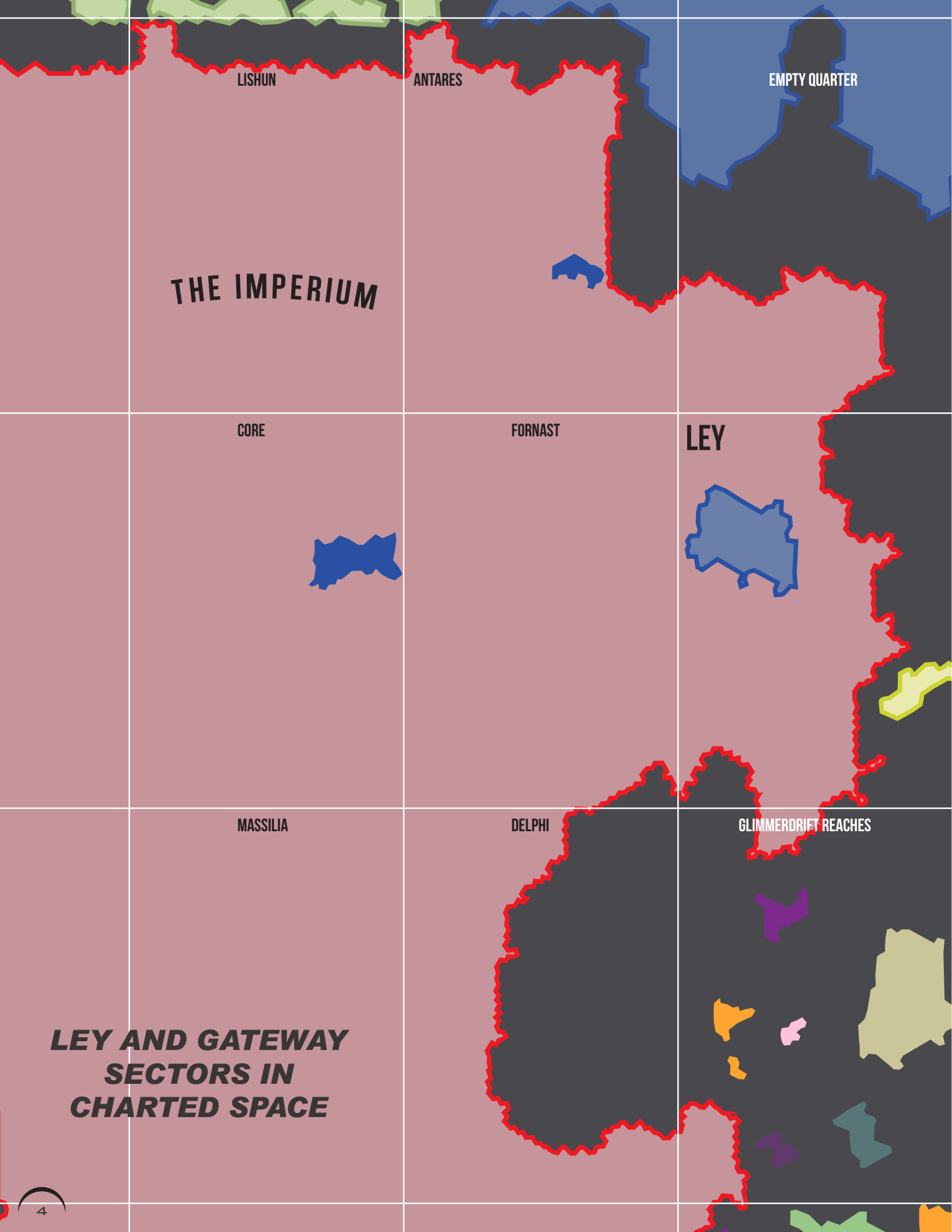
Eventually, simple agriculture and animal domestication became available to the Sydites and small states based around good farmland grew. Sydite civilisation was fairly peaceable due to their engineered psychology but their few wars were devastating due to the single-minded obedience of Sydite warriors. Whole regions were depopulated and then gradually taken over by the victors. Such wars were quite rare and did not produce the drive towards innovation and technological advancement typically found elsewhere. When not massacring one another the Sydites were for the most part content to till the soil and fish the coastal waters. There was little need to innovate or develop and, since Sydite culture was built around respect for hard work and team spirit, few reasons to fight. Technology developed slowly as most communities were content with simple devices built to reliable, time-honoured designs.

The Sydites reached Iron Age technology (TL1) around -120,000. By -30,000 a few enclaves had attained TL2. It is thought that a sudden climate change around -25,000 threw the Sydites' placid society into turmoil. Technological advance began to accelerate and the various small states coalesced into a single world state by about -10,000. This state systematically and almost feverishly colonised all areas of Sopater and began slow but determined technological development.

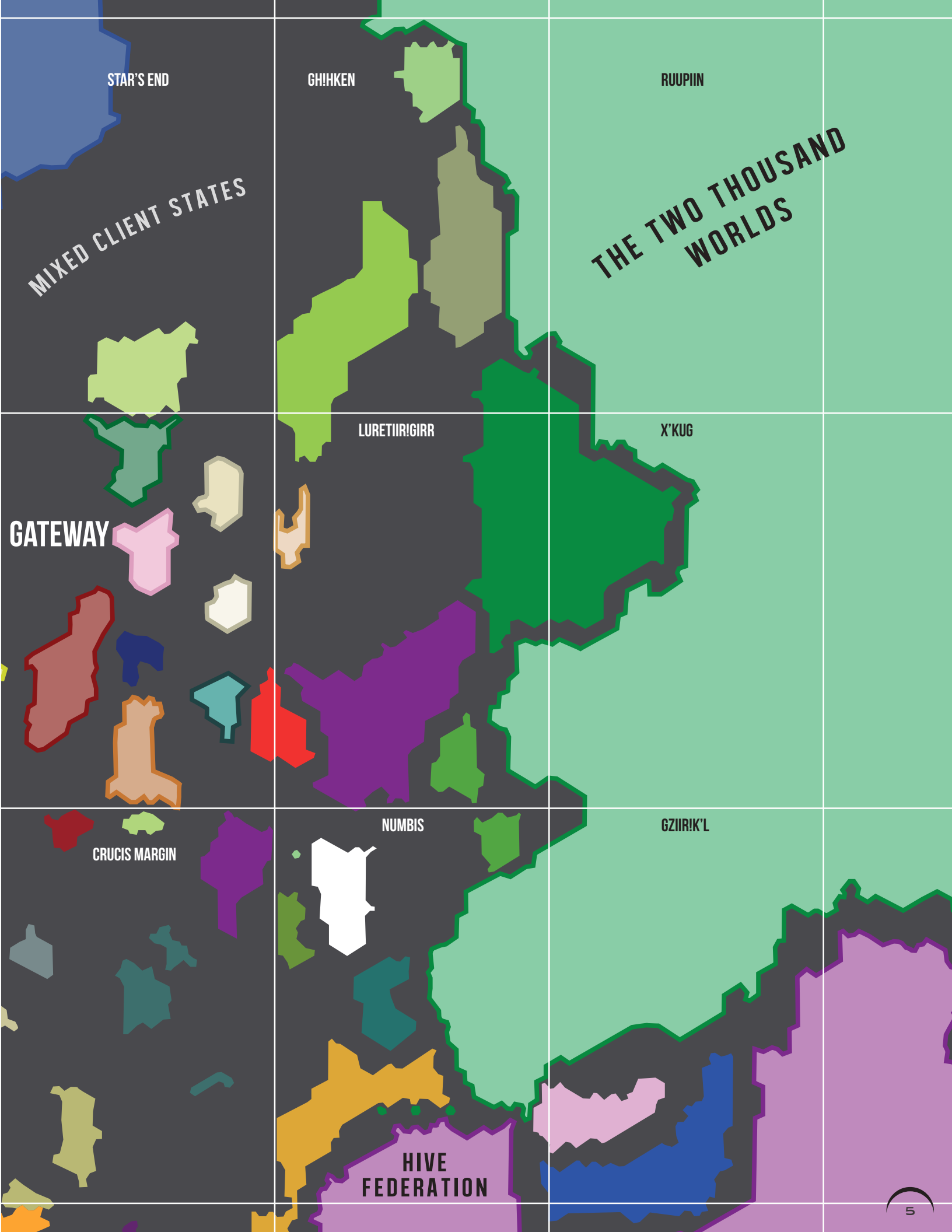
The Luriani, seeded on the water world of Daramm and adapted for life there, developed more quickly. On a world whose only land was a few scattered archipelagos, the Luriani rapidly developed long-distance sea travel and by -250,000 were fishing deep waters far from their island homes.

By -150,000, Luriani civilisations had flowered on almost all the archipelagos of their homeworld, linked by a tenuous web of trade and commerce. Over the next 50,000 years, ocean-going trade grew in importance until a true world economy existed. Government was still decentralised but the vast distances between island chains reduced the possibility of conflict to almost zero. The Luriani maintained this peaceful lifestyle for 100 millennia, during which time a caste of permanent ocean-dwellers arose. These linked the land-based communities, plying the trade lanes aboard their city-rafts. The Luriani might have gone on forever in this way, had the Vilani not contacted them.

The Luriani did advance during this time. By -28,000 they had developed land-based agriculture and began domesticating animals soon after. Metalworking was achieved in -15,000. By the time they were contacted by the Vilani Imperium, the Luriani had a TL6 society.



LEY AND GATEWAY SECTORS IN CHARTED SPACE


STAR'S END
GH!HKEN
RUUPIIN
MIXED CLIENT STATES
THE TWO THOUSAND WORLDS
LURETIIR!GIRR
X'KUG
GATEWAY
NUMBIS
GZIIR!K'L
CRUCIS MARGIN
HIVE FEDERATION

THE RISE OF THE VILANI

As the Vilani expanded throughout Charted Space, they contacted many other subspecies of Humaniti. All were absorbed into the Vilani Imperium, either slowly by cultural assimilation, or rapidly by economic or military conquest. Some species which had developed space or interstellar travel attempted to fight the Vilani and were crushed by the young empire.

At the time of the Vilani exploration of the Gateway region, the Luriani had achieved a stable TL6 society, based around technological versions of the traditional raftships. Contact with the Vilani around -7500 changed Luriani society very little. Perceived as a backward species and no threat, they traded a little with the Vilani, borrowed a few technological ideas and were allowed to go on with their peaceful existence unhindered.

However, offworld contact did spark an increase in the rate of technological growth among the Luriani. The Vilani undertook a cursory exploration of Ley but were more concerned with events nearer home. At this time the borders of the Vilani Imperium were far distant and the occasional trade ships who made the journey made a small profit at best. Thus, the Vilani did not witness the technological explosion that took place over the next 300 years or so.

Mariners by nature, the Luriani were fascinated by the concept of voyaging among the stars. Within 50 years of first contact, the first crude Luriani spacecraft made their uncertain way into orbit. By -7400 the Luriani had constructed an orbital staging post for exploration of their own system and in -7200 their first migration ship left the system.

The migration ships were a spacegoing version of the raftships that plied the oceans of Daramm. Crawling through space at sublight speeds, they spread out among the local cluster and set up colonies wherever they went. Most took settlers to other worlds but as was the nature of these spacegoing mariners, some continued their journeys. These voyagers linked the new colonies with the homeworld as their seagoing ancestors had done on Daramm.

By -6000, as the Vilani pushed their borders into Ley sector, the Luriani had settled about 30 worlds. Migration ships linked these far-flung colonies, spending decades in deep space at a time. Despite some surprise that the Luriani had advanced so far, the Vilani perceived no threat and simply informed the Luriani they were now a client state of the Vilani and thus bound by certain border agreements. The Luriani accepted this happily enough and life went on as before.

Everything changed in -5450 when the Luriani obtained jump drive technology. It is not clear where this came from but strong similarities suggest it was derived from the system used by the Vilani. The Luriani quickly converted some ships to jump capability and began operating them among the colonies. In -5435, a large trade and contact fleet belonging to the Sharurshid bureau of the Vilani Imperium passed through the region and noted the Luriani possession of jump drives.

Up until this point the Vilani had paid little attention to the new subjects and their quaint sublight starships. They had refused to release the secret of rapid interstellar travel, which was the key advantage they held over their competitors and since communication between the Luriani worlds took decades there was little chance of concerted disobedience. As a low-threat backwater, little exploration had been undertaken in the region.

Fortunately for the Luriani, the Vilani had just prototyped the jump-2 drive. This, and the fact that they had become very complacent about the Luriani, prevented much of a reaction. Nevertheless, officials in the Vilani Imperium decided to monitor the situation and find out where the technology had come from. In -5421, a jump-2 expeditionary force composed of new and powerful ships proceeded through Luriani space, making it very clear the Luriani were no match for the Vilani Imperium and its fleets.

The jump-2 fleet moved into Ley without divulging its mission to the Luriani people. Over the next few years, horribly mangled ships limped back through the region, sometimes assisted by the Luriani vessels they had come to impress. By -5402, the remnants of the fleet had returned to Vland; at least, all the ships that could come back. The fate of the rest remains unknown, at least to the general public.

THE CONSOLIDATION WARS

Shocked at their defeat in Ley, the Vilani leaders launched a series of massive campaigns to integrate and subjugate all potential rivals. The Consolidation Wars, as these campaigns were collectively known, were fought on all borders of the Vilani Imperium and even within it as suspect worlds were pre-emptively squashed. Beginning in -5400, the Consolidation Wars took Vilani fleets out far beyond their borders,

creating a cleared zone in which no potential rival would be tolerated. Those that did not surrender and agree to limitations of technology and military power were exterminated.

The Consolidation Wars did not really come to Ley sector until -4700. Before that, small raids and scouting missions occasionally took place but no major campaign was undertaken. The Vilani fleets bypassed the Luriani cluster and carried out operations in the neighbouring subsectors, with the occasional deeper foray. Vilani expansion more or less stopped at the natural frontier; the trailing-rimward edge of Ley sector. Officially, the region was of no great importance except to create a buffer zone. However, rumours persist to this day of forward patrol bases and long-range scouting missions into Gateway.

During this time, the Vilani negotiated with the Luriani in the hope of incorporating them into the Imperium without the massive ship losses involved in a campaign against a multi-world power. The Luriani were seen as a minor threat since they had always cooperated happily with the Vilani during their long period as a client state. Only the fact they had a large number of ships that conceivably could be used against the Vilani – however remote the possibility – made them any threat at all.

Ironically, the determined efforts of the Vilani negotiators to nullify the Luriani threat was what created it. For almost 120 years, the Luriani had negotiated in good faith but were becoming increasingly alarmed at the Vilani posture – and what they were doing in the surrounding subsectors. The Luriani quietly began expanding their fleets and putting defences in order.

In -4582, the Vilani decided to terminate the Luriani military build-up before it went any further and launched the Luriani Consolidation Campaign. Facing the vast fleets of the First Imperium, the Luriani were doomed from the start. Nevertheless, they fought to defend their worlds and it took the mighty Vilani Imperium some 35 years to conquer them. The fighting was bitter, both planetside and in space. One reason for this was the aquatic nature of the Luriani. Natural 3D navigators, they had a feel for space combat that somewhat balanced the technological advantages of the Vilani.

Another reason for the cost of the war was the fanatical nature of Luriani resistance. As the war dragged on and it became obvious they would lose, the Luriani changed their combat style. Unable to keep pace with losses,

their shipyards changed production from well-protected battle ships to small, fast but lightly defended strike ships. The strategic emphasis of the campaign shifted, with the Luriani no longer seeking to hold their worlds and defeat the Vilani. Seeing this was impossible, they instead sought to make each victory cost the Vilani as dearly as possible.

The Luriani never actually employed suicide ships but their standard mode of combat was extremely risky. Nevertheless, there was no shortage of volunteers to undergo scanty training and crew the strike ships. Less than 50% of these vessels survived their first battle but the damage they inflicted in their reckless attacks was impressive. Often built around a single, oversized weapon mount or with the sole purpose of getting a pair of torpedoes (short-range missiles with heavy warheads and high acceleration) close to a capital ship, the Luriani ships were shot out of the sky in droves, yet they blasted huge holes in the vastly superior Vilani fleet.

Some historians have suggested the Luriani must have received aid from an unknown source during this war, since the Vilani could not possibly have been held off

for so long by a mere 30-world power. Curiously, there is no record of any such assistance in either Luriani or Vilani histories of the time.

The Vilani undertook little ground fighting, except where it was completely necessary. Normally, once space superiority was established, orbital bombardment and weapons of mass destruction were employed to crush opposition, unless (and sometimes even if) unconditional surrender was forthcoming. Eventually, in -4547, Daramm fell and the remaining Luriani worlds surrendered.

As soon as the Ziru Sirka had a firm hold on the Luriani worlds, investigators moved in and carried out some kind of purge. Exactly what was done is now unknown, suggesting the purge was a complete success. These events took place in -4546, which is now known as the Year of Woe.

Elsewhere in the region, great events were also unfolding. By -4305, the K'Kree had properly unified their homeworld and continued technological development led to the creation of grav vehicles by -4228. Shortly thereafter, the K'Kree launched a campaign of genocide against a species of intelligent carnivores inhabiting their moon. The war was brought to a successful conclusion in -4167 with the extermination of the carnivores and the declaration of the Axavktrr!xur, or fundamental principles of survival which demand the extermination of all carnivores that will not permit themselves to be converted to vegetarianism.

The K'Kree exploration of other star systems began in -4142 with the invention of the jump drive. Expansion into neighbouring systems was of course accompanied by extermination of their native carnivores. It is not known how many primitive omnivorous or carnivorous species were forcibly adapted or exterminated in the process.

The Hivers developed a crude proto-jump drive in -4698, and began exploring local space. This drive was flawed and tended to break down after a small number of jumps. By -4212, a superior drive was available (which did not break down) and the Hivers were able to begin exploring further afield. This led to contact with the Ithklur in -3986. The Ithklur were the first advanced species contacted by the Hivers and the most violent they ever met. The Ithklur were already exploring their home system when the Hivers arrived and the Hivers were terrified by the thought of these dangerous aliens rampaging around nearby space once they discovered the jump drive.

The Ithklur were thus subjected to a blockade and 1,000-year manipulation project intended to somewhat curb their homicidal lunacy. The Hivers claim this project was a success; the Ithklur became less violent and also a little less smart. The Ithklur say they are no different to the way they were then. Whichever is true, the Ithklur eventually became a subject race of the Hive Federation and have acted as its shock troops ever since.

THE FALL OF THE VILANI

Once the Consolidation Wars ended, the Vilani settled into comfortable dominance of their vast empire, which became known as the Ziru Sirka or Grand Empire of Stars. Minor incidents were easily put down and expeditions ranged beyond the borders to ensure no 'barbarian' people gained access to jump-2 drives. For centuries the Vilani were successful and no threat arose to shake their deepening complacency. By -4000, exploration by the Vilani had all but ceased. The Ziru Sirka reached its greatest size by -3500 and began to stagnate, although to its members it seemed they were living in a golden age of peace and prosperity.

The long peace was shattered in -2422 when the Terrans, exploring out from their homeworld in primitive jump-1 ships, made contact with the Ziru Sirka. Within 15 years, the Terrans were at war with the Vilani Imperium, whose immense size they did not even suspect. The early wars forced the diverse people of Terra to unite and the Terran Confederation was established in -2398.

The initial clashes between the First Imperium and the upstart Terrans caused the merest ripples as far afield as the Trailing Frontier. Even as the wars dragged on and the Ziru Sirka began to disintegrate, Vilani holdings in the region remained loyal. Centuries of firm rule had thoroughly squashed the idea of rebellion and independence. A series of short wars and brief periods of peace ensued. These at first concerned the Ziru Sirka little. Dealing with a few barbarians was a matter for provincial forces and even these were slow to react. Internal politics distracted the Vilani commanders and centuries of decay and complacency sapped the will and ability of local commanders to act. The provincial forces concealed the extent of their losses, fearing political repercussions, which in turn prevented them from receiving adequate reinforcements.

Meanwhile the Terrans absorbed Vilani technology and developed their own, constantly surprising the Imperials with their ingenuity. The next two centuries saw the Terrans striking ever-harder blows against the Ziru Sirka, which was beginning to crack under

internal stress. Even as the extent of the colossus they were battling finally dawned on the Terrans, it became apparent that the Ziru Sirka was dying. A combination of internal decay and external hammering caused the Grand Empire of Stars to totter and finally fall. Terran fleets slashed through collapsing defences, ripping what remained of the heart out of the carcass that had once been the Vilani Imperium.

THE RAMSHACKLE EMPIRE

The collapse of the Ziru Sirka came swiftly, in historical terms. The end of the First Imperium and its replacement by the Second (The Rule of Man) is officially dated as -2204, but it was some years before the repercussions were felt in what is now the Trailing Frontier.

During the collapse of the Vilani Imperium the Luriani allied themselves with the Terrans and sent forces to fight alongside the advancing fleets. Despite this assistance, the Second Imperium did not grant the Luriani autonomy and resentment over this eventually led to a rebellion in -2186. Within six years the revolt had been put down by a combination of Terran and Vilani forces.

The Luriani failed to win their autonomy by military means but were able to secure it through their unique culture. As Luriani art and music became popular in the Rule of Man, sympathy for their cause grew. The Second Imperium formally recognised the Luriani Cultural Region in -1932. Solomani governors were appointed but the Second Imperium remained determined to preserve the unique culture of the Luriani people. Over time the loosely defined cultural region became today's Luriani Cultural Association, the nearest thing to a multi-world power within the Imperium.

Although thoroughly subjugated, the Luriani people retained much of their cultural identity throughout their long membership of the Ziru Sirka. As the economic and governmental apparatus of the Imperium collapsed, the Luriani did not turn on the millions of Vilani living among them, instead accepting them as part of Luriani society. These Vilani-Luriani became known as the Mmarislusant, which means victims of history. The Mmarislusant were encouraged to retain their traditional Vilani culture and way of life, and in time became an important part of Luriani society.

The Second Imperium made contact with the Sydites in -2174, and even set up a small trade mission on Sopater, as the Sydites then named their homeworld. The Sydites were able to purchase a few examples of jump-1 technology and over the next few years established a number of colonies. However, they could not maintain this technology without outside help and as the Ramshackle Empire disintegrated, the Sydites vanished from the cosmic stage.

Meanwhile, the Hivers had met the K'Kree. Contact came in -2045, and the aggressive K'Kree quickly occupied several Hiver worlds. The resulting war lasted from -2029 to -2013, and saw the Hivers defeated at every turn. The Hiver fleet was little more than a police force and exploration service, and could not stand against the K'Kree onslaught. Driven back deep into their territory, the Hivers faced defeat. The story of how they snatched victory from the jaws of defeat varies depending upon who is telling it.

The K'Kree rarely speak of what made them surrender to the Hivers but it is known they sterilised four worlds that had been occupied by their ground forces, and that these systems remain interdicted to this day. The Hivers claim they showed the K'Kree evidence they had manipulated the K'Kree inhabitants of those worlds into becoming carnivores and threatened to do the same to the rest of the K'Kree species. The Ithklur claim the Hivers bluffed the K'Kree into believing this was the case, merely taking advantage of some events that had occurred involving Ithklur and K'Kree ground forces.

Whatever the truth, the K'Kree agreed to an armistice that became a permanent treaty and the Hiver-K'Kree war ended in -2013. The peace that has existed since has been threatened many times but open war does not seem desirable to either party. While there is some debate about exactly how the Hivers defeated their enemy, it is known that K'Kree philosophy was somewhat amended at this time. The Law of Reason remained in force but the fundamental principles were overturned, resulting in a somewhat more moderate K'Kree society. Many K'Kree still followed the principles, however.

During the conquest of the First Imperium by the Terrans, many groups sought to escape the rampant militarism and social upheavals taking place. Colonist groups set out to find a new home. Many went rimward, or out to trailing or spinward, beyond the great powers of Charted Space. The fates of many are unknown. Those that settled in Gateway sector were eventually recontacted after many decades of isolation.

THE TWILIGHT

The Vilani Imperium was deep in decay when the Terrans over-ran it. Opinions are divided as to whether the Terrans hastened the fall of interstellar civilisation,

or granted it a new (if short) lease of life. Whichever is true, the Solomani rulers of the Second Imperium, as the Terrans now styled themselves, were unable to prevent the slow disintegration of their empire. The collapse was gradual and it is hard to place an exact moment at which the Rule of Man reached the point of no return. Historians normally cite the economic crisis of -1776 as 9PM, the point when night became inevitable.

Yet even as the Ramshackle Empire collapsed, colonists forged out into the deeps of space, scattering across Gateway, Crucis Margin and the Glimmerdrift Reaches. Records are patchy at best but it is thought that in Gateway, colonists reached as far as Tharver, Bremen and Salur by -1700, and that by -1511 (confirmed as the date of founding of the Carlton colony) established trade routes existed across the sector. Groups settling in Crucis Margin and Glimmerdrift Reaches sectors found a variety of fortunes.

In Ley, refugees from the collapsing Rule of Man created a nation-state based on Shanape, which they named Matarishan. This state, the Matarishan Federation, was founded in -1770. It survived for a time but by -1550 no functional starships remained. Without contact between its members, the Federation effectively dissolved, although some traditions and a feeling of affinity between the member populations survived throughout the Long Night.

THE LONG NIGHT

The period between the collapse of the Second Imperium and the rise of the Third is generally referred to as the Long Night. During this time, interstellar trade and travel more or less ceased and many worlds slid back into barbarism or died out completely. However, the images of the Long Night as a vast period of emptiness are incorrect. Taken as an average across Charted Space, the amount of interstellar travel was virtually zero when compared to the Imperial period but it did not cease entirely. Nor did night fall instantly.

The twilight period saw the gradual decline of interstellar civilisation, the dwindling of trade and the collapse of interstellar government. During this period of decline and increasing lawlessness, some small interstellar polities clung on to their technology and society. One such was the Sylean Federation, an alliance of 30 worlds which remained a starfaring power throughout the Long Night and eventually founded the Third Imperium. Another was the Terran Mercantile Community. A third was the Luriani Federation.

The Luriani (and their absorbed Vilani population) gained a third population segment and a vital strategic asset in the form of a Second Imperium fleet. As it became obvious the Ramshackle Empire was collapsing into darkness, the fleet assigned to protect and pacify the Ley sector took a courageous decision. Those ships that could be spared departed for various regions of the collapsing Imperium with crewmembers

desperate to try to get home. Those who remained (the vast majority) pledged their courage and lives to continue the work of the Imperial Navy – defending interstellar civilisation.

The Solomani fleet under Governor-General Martinez traded base rights and protection for citizenship. In so doing, they became the Verasti Dtareen, or Terran Protectors. Thus was born the Luriani Protectorate. As the people of Luriani cultural region struggled to stave off the encroaching darkness, their Solomani protectors defended the spaceways and made the survival of the cluster possible. In time, they too were absorbed into a culture that, while dominated by Luriani people and Luriani values, was strengthened by the traditions and talents of both the Vilani and Solomani people.

Other lights shone out or flickered in the darkness. Several times minor powers made the leap to starfaring status but most fell back and were forgotten. The Long Night dragged on and on, gradually extinguishing the few remaining beacons until the Luriani became convinced they were alone in the night… and their own glow was flickering. The last handful of Verasti Dtareen vessels wore out by -1183, and the Protectorate ceased to exist. The only contact between the Luriani worlds was maintained by migrating caravan ships. Effectively the situation was as it had been before the coming of the Vilani.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the region that would become the Trailing Frontier, other small interstellar states survived and even grew. Throughout the Long Night, a handful of states retained starflight and many more rose for a brief period before falling back into the darkness. The stories of these states are probably lost forever, although archaeologists continue to search for clues. One recurring legend speaks of an emergent civilisation in the coreward end of Gateway shattered and obliterated by an unknown catastrophe that seems to have claimed several worlds at once.

THE PRE-DAWN YEARS

Isolated from much of human-occupied space by astrography and distance, Gateway charted its own path through the Long Night. As new states rose and fell, some remained throughout the Long Night, although they saw many changes during the period. One of the states that remained in existence in one form or another was Tharver, one of the original colonies in the region. Tharver's culture and government survived, albeit with various upheavals, right through the Long Night. In the final years before the Dawn, Tharver was in a period of growth.

This period is often referred to as the Corporate Sector Wars, as the various Tharver-based corporations skirmished and occasionally fought pitched battles in space or on the surface of their various commercial colonies. The wars sputtered and sparked from about -150 to 70 Imperial, although they did not stop the corporations of Tharver from expanding into new territories, bringing trade, industry and ultimately civilisation to worlds increasingly far out from the homeworld. Some projects undertaken by these corporations were impressive, such as the creation of an artificial worldlet in the system now known as Gateway. Gateway Station (now called Gateway Prime) remains an important trade hub to this day.

In -200, a vessel belonging to the Tharver-based corporation Galastrian Metals made what is thought to be the first human contact with the K'Kree of the Two Thousand Worlds. Initial excitement at the trade possibilities now opening up became disappointment and in some quarters dismay, as the nature of the K'Kree – and their lack of interest in trade – became apparent.

In Ley, the Matarishan Federation was recreated in -27, when dissident Syleans, heading out into the unknown to escape the changes sweeping through the Sylean Federation, made contact with the former worlds of the Matarishan Federation. The Federation gradually regained jump capability and began to re-unite its people, only to be caught between the Luriani and the Sydymic Empire. Worlds changed hands between these three powers for centuries, until Imperial annexation of the region imposed an external settlement.

THE COMING OF THE THIRD IMPERIUM

The Third Imperium was founded in what is now known as Year 0 but its forerunner, the Sylean Federation, had been sending out long-range exploration and trade missions for at least 20 years before. Those missions increased in range and capability as the Federation became the Imperium and found its feet. Although expansion of the Imperial border was fairly slow – one to three parsecs per year was typical at that time – the influence of the new Imperium and its powerful commercial entities was felt far beyond its borders.

Some clusters and individual worlds readily became Imperial client states. Some particularly important systems were forcibly annexed as outposts until the border reached them. Some worlds opposed the Imperium and fought its expansion as alliances or alone. For these and other reasons, The Trailing

Frontier was not the scene of rapid Imperial expansion. However, the effects of the Imperial Restoration (since the Third Imperium claims direct lineage from the First and Second, it was restored rather than founded) were profound. One of the most important events was the chance meeting of a Luriani vessel and a Sylean long-range scout. This occurred in -30 and had important ramifications, although it was not until -16 that a Sylean ship actually entered Luriani space.

News they were not alone galvanised the Luriani people. Trade with the Sylean Federation led to more formal agreements and even the establishment of a Sylean Federation Scout Service base in Luriani space. Concern was expressed in some quarters when the Federation declared itself the successor of the First and Second Imperium, and crowned its leader Cleon Zhunastu as Emperor Cleon I. However, at that time the fledgling Imperium was far away, connected only by tenuous trade corridors through a wilderness of space… and the Imperium was every bit as friendly as the Federation had been.

The Second Luriani Protectorate was declared in -29, and within 45 years it controlled a 5-parsec region around Daramm. Contact was made with the various polities in Gateway, although this was intermittent and little meaningful trade took place. Indeed, Gateway was sliding into something of an economic depression, which really began to bite around year 50. Even contact with the young Imperium, which for Tharver came in Year 64, did little to improve the situation. Imperial resources were at that time greatly stretched and expansion into an apparently poor and non-threatening region of space were placed very low on the list of priorities.

IMPERIAL EXPANSION

Naturally, the Third Imperium did expand, its borders creeping out at a couple of parsecs a year. Most regions were assimilated bloodlessly through a combination of diplomacy, economic pressure and a reputation for fair and honourable conduct. Some worlds were eager to accept the protection of the Imperial Navy but others resisted. This period of often-forcible expansion is collectively known as the Pacification Campaigns and is generally considered to have taken place in the period 76–120.

The Third Imperium was involved in a number of naval, ground and peacekeeping campaigns at any given time in its early expansion. One of the most notable was the Arnaki Rebellion of 91–99, which drained Imperial resources considerably. During this time, tension between the Second Luriani Protectorate and the Third Imperium increased. Negotiations broke down and the Imperial Archduke Ishargi, assigned to oversee the region, decided to strengthen his hand with a show of force. Leading a considerable fleet, Archduke Ishargi began a flag-showing tour through the region, intending to deliberately flout Luriani sovereignty to underscore his vast advantage in terms of strength.

However, in one of those flukes of history, the bulk of the Protectorate fleet was conducting exercises in the Rurur system when Ishargi's force arrived. The resulting battle was a resounding defeat for the Imperials and Archduke Ishargi was killed aboard his flagship. This sparked the Luriani War of 93–96. At first the Imperials, distracted by the Arnaki Rebellion and the minor insurrections it inspired were unable to make much headway against the talented Luriani crews. However, in time the scales tipped increasingly in favour of the Imperials and in 96 the Protectorate surrendered, accepting Imperial annexation without condition.

Incorporation of the Protectorate into the Imperium was not completed for another century. For no sooner had the Imperials broken Luriani resistance than they were sent to engage other foes; first the remnants of the Arnaki Rebellion and later a new empire deemed to pose a threat to the expanding Imperium. In the far rimward-trailing region of Ley lay the Sydymic Empire, a powerful interstellar state ruled by another minor human race. This was the empire of the Sydites, who had slowly and painfully climbed back onto the interstellar stage after rediscovering jump drive in the last years of the Long Night and now ruled parts of four subsectors.

Skirmishes between Imperial ships and Sydite vessels had taken place since 73 but with the Luriani blocking Imperial expansion, it was not until about 100 that real conflict began. The next 20 years saw a series of small but bitter fleet clashes along the Sydite borders. The Sydites proved to be unimaginative but very determined fighters; their inferior technology compensated for by the fact that the Imperials were operating at the end of long lines of communications.

When the Pacification Campaigns officially ended, the Imperials had made no real headway against the Sydites. Unwilling to go to the lengths required to crush them, the Imperials simply drew back a little and adopted a defensive stance, more or less ending the conflict. This had the effect of further curtailing Imperial movements towards Gateway, which was

still struggling although some very hard times. The Imperials had been aware of the K'Kree for many years and had even opened tentative communications when the first official meeting of ambassadors took place on Mneonon in the year 103.

IMPERIAL CONSOLIDATION

The Third Imperium continued to expand, albeit at a slower pace, after the Pacification Campaigns. This created considerable tension in other regions and the occasional war. Most notable among these was the Julian War of 175–191, which is notable mainly for the fact that it ended in an expensive stalemate.

One factor in the Imperial decision to seek a peace was the destruction of the Fornast and Ley sector naval depots by deep-raiding Julian fleets. These fleets brought the war to Ley sector for a time and significantly weakened the Imperial position in the region. Nevertheless, the Luriani cluster was formally absorbed into the Imperium in 200–220. After a long period of negotiations, an acceptable settlement was reached and formalised by the Treaty of Daramm. This included the formation of a new Luriani Cultural Region administration to oversee the integration which existed from 202–217, and disbanded once its work was done. The Luriani culture was absorbed into the Imperium with little disruption.

Imperial expansion beyond the Luriani cluster has been fairly slow since 220, although over the next 300 years the border gradually crept out. Several worlds of the Sydymic Empire were annexed during this period, mainly through economic conquest. Crises elsewhere in the Imperium – and the periods of reconstruction after each – tempered the Imperial inclination to annex the Sydymic Empire by force, while on the Sydymic side fear of Imperial weapons technology, coupled with internal divisions, prevented any serious attempts at resistance.

Meanwhile in Gateway, the hard times finally resulted in upheaval. Starting with Gateway Station, dozens of worlds demanded independence from Tharver. The War for Gateway Independence, which lasted only a few months and took the form of a few minor skirmishes, was the catalyst for these worlds to break away. At this time, Gateway Station was converted from an industrial base to a world in its own right, requiring several projects of considerable ingenuity. In 252 the world changed its name to simply Gateway (although it is usually referred to as Gateway Prime to distinguish it from the system that also carries its name) to reflect its status as an independent world.

Gateway gradually became the hub of a number of important trade routes among the independent worlds and when a workers' uprising on Tharver finally broke the homeworld's influence over the local region, Gateway became the centre of a commercial entity known as the Galian Trade League. The league at its largest comprised around 80 worlds and although a rather loose organisation it was extremely influential for many years. The worlds which today comprise the Galian Federation, Trindel Confederacy and the Plavian league were all members of the Trade League in the past.

UPHEAVAL IN GATEWAY

Although Imperial influence in Gateway was minimal in the years leading up to the Imperial Civil war, all was not calm and peaceful there. A workers' revolt on Barclaron which spread to other corporate worlds created the Collective in 320 and 425 saw the rise of the Hochiken Republic along the coreward border of the sector. Despite being established by another workers' revolt, the Republic was a democratic moderate state until a second rising in 590 placed a military government in power. Now known as the Hochiken Peoples' Assembly, the HPA is repressive police state wracked by suspicion and paranoia.

The pirate bands of Gateway, many of whom had their origins in the privateer groups of the Corporate Sector Wars, established several pirate haven states at this time, some of which became legitimate governments, their pirate vessels the basis of a real navy. Most either threw out their overlords or remained havens for the raiders.

THE SYDYMIC WAR

In 604 the Third Imperium was plunged into a civil war which raged for 18 years. As the fleets were pulled from the frontiers to fight for various claimants to the Iridium Throne, the Sydites saw their chance to regain their lost territory and perhaps even gain some additional systems.

Initial clashes went heavily in favour of the Sydites, who rapidly drove the weakened Imperial fleets out of the Frontier Worlds subsector. Captured Imperial technology was pressed into service and when in 640 the Imperial fleets returned in force to the region, striking from bases in the Ley and Glimmerdrift Reaches Sectors, they found they had a major fight on their hands.

Even with the captured Imperial systems, the Sydites were overmatched. The Imperials had better and more integrated technology, more ships and years of

fleet combat experience. The Sydites had only the advantages of interior lines of communication and their characteristic doggedness. In fact, the Sydites were aware they could not win a campaign on purely military terms. Their strategy was based around forcing the Imperials to accept a peace treaty as an alternative to immense bloodshed. It might have worked at another time but after the horror of the Civil War, the Imperium had little patience and was more or less numbed to casualty figures. Every world of the Sydite Empire was heavily fortified and most of the Sydite ships stationed in important systems were non-jump-capable vessels. Not only were these ships more capable than starships of comparable size, but they could also not retreat and seemed disinclined to surrender. Once the system defences were broken, orbital and ground weapons engaged the invading Imperials and then the ground campaigns began.

As the Sydite leaders had hoped, the war proved to be bloody and costly for the Imperials. The Sydymic troops, with their strength and size advantage, were able to hold their own against the highly trained Imperial marines. The Imperium lost tens and hundreds of thousands of troops for each world they fought for and gained but fight and take them the Imperial forces did.

The Sydymic leaders were dumbfounded that the Imperials would tolerate such staggering losses in each campaign and still continue. No matter how high the cost to the Imperium, they kept coming. The Sydites watched as their new conquests slowly fell, then their former colonies, and for the first time they witnessed one of their core worlds fall to Imperial forces as they finally broke through and regained control of the Frontier Worlds subsector in 672.

The Sydymic Empire tried to sue for peace in 673, only to lose two more worlds to the Imperium before the Imperials finally accepted a temporary cease-fire. The cease-fire continued for the better part of the next year as the Empire squirmed and negotiated with the Imperium, attempting to avoid the unconditional surrender the Imperials were demanding. On the first day of the new year following Holiday week in the Imperium, the Imperials demonstrated they had again lost patience with the Sydites. A massive Imperial fleet arrived in the homeworld system of the Sydymic Empire, Sopater, and began to deploy for a siege. However, the siege was a ruse.

As the Sydites settled into a defensive routine, the Imperials launched an all-or-nothing planetary assault. Despite heavy resistance, the homeworld of the Sydites and the Empire fell in less than a week. When news began to break across the other worlds of the Empire chaos ensued and the Sydymic Empire unravelled. By the end of the year 675 the emperor was dead, he and his extended family assassinated by the Sydymic Fleet Admiral Asmocchek. As the acting head of state, Asmocchek began earnestly negotiating with the Imperials in an attempt to prevent what he feared to be severe Imperial sanctions and reprisals against his people.

It took less than a week for an agreement that Asmocchek himself admitted was far more conciliatory on the part of the Imperium than his people had a right to expect after inflicting such heavy losses on the Imperial forces. The Sydite homeworld would remain under Imperial protection as a Client State, along with some other Sydite colonies. All remaining, uncaptured former worlds of the Empire were given their independence and some were offered true Client State status with the Imperium. Some chose to ally with their former enemies and others took the opportunity to take control of their own destinies but most core worlds of the Empire chose to realign themselves into a trade confederation rather than have anything more to do with the Imperials than necessary. This confederation eventually developed into the Khuur League in 778.

THE POST-CIVIL WAR YEARS

After the Sydymic War, the Imperials undertook a period of consolidation that lasted for three centuries. Formal annexation of the Highlord subsector in 648 put an end to the constant friction between the Matarishan Federation and the Luriani, although the annexation had to be rammed down the throats of the Federation members. In the years that followed, resistance by former Federation members flared up from time-to-time. By 900, the majority of citizens had become content with Imperial membership and use the Imperial name Shanape for the old Federation capital Matarishan. However, factions of the population do still resent the annexation and a small but determined Matarishan Freedom Movement continues to oppose the Imperium by whatever means seem appropriate.

As the years passed, the Imperial border continued to creep slowly outwards but at no great pace. The region became a backwater, an area of little concern. Some cynics suggest that this was a deliberate policy intended to put off the day when the Imperial border might butt up against that of the Hive Federation or – far more seriously – the Two Thousand Worlds. Whatever the reason, Imperial interest in the Gateway region was lacking and the economy gradually

stagnated. By 990 the Ley sector economy was in decline, strangled by the self-serving agendas of a clique of major nobles and business leaders.

Gateway had its own troubles. The Viyard Alliance, formed of nine worlds formerly part of the Galian trade League, broke away in 750 and defeated Galian naval forces sent to reclaim them. The Alliance was then absorbed into the Collective, which became known as the Viyard Concourse. One important factor in these difficult years was the rise of lawlessness and piracy in the sector. Interstellar trade became increasingly risky and expensive, forcing some corporations out of business and damaging others. The Galian Trade League, based on interstellar commerce, suffered badly. Despite the best efforts of the League to destroy pirate bases and provide adequate security for vessels and installations, almost the entire region became what amounted to a pirate haven. Particularly bold bands began raiding into Ley from about 850 onwards and it has been suggested the Solomani Confederation backed and encouraged these groups.

Imperial response was sluggish and mainly defensive in the form of escorts and anti-piracy sweeps. However, the worsening situation did prompt several cross-border raids. Some of the early ones were embarrassing failures but eventually the Imperial Navy and Marines made piracy within Imperial space or along its borders a very dangerous occupation. However, the raids had taken their toll and continued almost unabated in Gateway. The Galian Trade League finally fragmented under internal pressure, with the Galian war beginning in 911. This war pitted the league against itself, as rebel elements seized important installations and fleet units threw in their lot with the various factions. Trindel and Plaven declared independence in 912 and 915 respectively, creating their own small interstellar polities as they did so. In fact, these worlds had been independent for several years and remained League members in name only.

As of 915, the Galian Trade League had ceased to exist. Gateway remained an important commercial centre throughout the war and commercial influence was a driving force in the reorganisation of the League remnants. The Galian League became the Galian Federation in 925 and although much reduced in size, actually became more prosperous.

The K'Kree remained a distant threat and considerable influence in Gateway for many years but in 874 a new and disturbing event took place. A K'Kree leader named L'lluii!pri'vguurlg embraced the discredited Fundamental Principles and began

K'Kree leader L'lluii!pri'vguurlg

advocating a return to the crusade of extermination against the meat-eaters. This action led to friction with the existing leadership and his followers being expelled from the Two Thousand Worlds. In 885 they founded Xuruk'xaar'keer!, known by humans as the Xuruk Empire or Lords of Thunder, beyond the Two Thousand Worlds and on the fringe of human space where their militant attitudes made them a direct threat to the non-vegetarian races of nearby space.

Within the Imperium, certain important events took place which, although distant, had effects felt far and wide. The Psionics Suppressions, beginning in 800, were marked by a wave of anti-psionic feeling which swept through the citizens of the Imperium. Psionic Institutes across the Imperium were shut down and, in some cases, their members arrested or even lynched. A wave of psionic refugees swept across the border, headed out of the Imperium and to whatever worlds or states would have them.

THE SOLOMANI RIM WAR

The outbreak of the Solomani Rim War in 990 threw Gateway into turmoil. Increasing tensions with the Solomani Confederation (far beyond the Gateway region, to rimward) had already drawn off a proportion of the Imperium's naval strength, leading to a small rise in smuggling and piracy. For the Trailing Frontier, the most important consequence was the exposure of corruption within regional administration.

Archduke Nells, overseeing a relatively quiet region which attracted little official attention, had allowed an unacceptable level of cronyism and corruption to arise in the higher levels of Ley's economy. Imperial contracts went to friends and allies rather than firms better placed to provide goods at competitive prices. In peacetime this might have gone unnoticed but with the emperor touring the region to personally request money and initiatives to strengthen the Imperial fleets, Nells' inability to deliver on his promises would inevitably be noticed.

Accounts of what happened vary according to the source but it seems that Imperial contracts were offered on generous terms and Archduke Nells made sure they went to his own followers. In addition to causing a new wave of disaffection and resentment throughout the sector, these contracts produced sub-standard goods which were not delivered on time, if at all. New classes of inexpensive combat craft were crashed into production and delivered before their fundamental flaws were discovered and vital weapons components never went into production at all.

The resulting shambles resulted in the rise of a consortium of less well-connected businesses and leaders, led by one Marcus Aaron Erechs. It may be that he promised too much but the emperor decided to give him a chance. The title of Archduke of Gateway Domain was stripped from Nells and passed to Erechs, who plunged into the task of purging the sector's economy and delivering the necessary contribution to the war effort.

Erechs undertook a number of radical reforms, starting by declaring the Imperial Trade Cluster right at the edge of the Imperium and moving the Domain capital there. Money the regional economy did not have was poured into entrepreneurial endeavours whilst the monopolies of Nells' sympathisers were smashed. The subsequent years became known as The Great Free-For-All and were characterised by boom, bust and general chaos. The sector's economy could not be fixed overnight but trade figures did, on balance, improve considerably.

However, Erechs was riding a tiger. Many of those benefiting from reckless levels of investment exceeded their capabilities in order to grab as much as possible before the bubble burst – or genuinely thought they could control the situation. Some did succeed and many of today's major firms have their origins in the Great Free-For-All – although not always under their original ownership. Erechs' enemies also benefited from the same investment and inevitably the blame for every failed venture was placed at his door.

As the Solomani Rim War raged on, Gateway Domain became an increasingly troubled region. On the one hand, business was booming and there were opportunities for all. On the other, the political situation was in chaos and with increasing numbers of navy ships being drawn off to fight the war, piracy and commerce raiding by long-distance Solomani raiders was on the rise. Agents and agitators attempted to spark rebellion and insurrection on dozens of worlds.

Although the Solomani Rim War did not directly affect Ley, agitation and occasional raiding added to the general turmoil. By the time the war ended in 1002, a large proportion of the Imperial Navy strength assigned to the sector had been drawn off and huge amounts of money and materiel intended for use in Ley had been redirected. Obsolescent warships replaced front-line units and were themselves pulled away as losses mounted. As a result, the Ley fleet was vastly understrength and composed for the most part of weak or obsolete vessels.

THE POST-WAR YEARS

The turbulence caused by internal politics and war did not end when peace broke out. Indeed, for Ley this was the beginning of almost a century of difficulties. Boom-and-bust economics continued for many years and Imperial money was not forthcoming. Not only were the central coffers strained by the need to rebuild after the extremely costly Solomani Rim War but the big promises made by the new archduke now came back to bite. He had asked for and been given the chance to fix the corrupt economy and the emperor's inclination was to let him get on with it.

The Great Free-For-All is generally considered to have ended in 1029, although conditions had been steadily improving for some years before that. The death of former Archduke Nells in 1021 and his replacement as sector duke by a supporter of the current archduke stabilised the internal politics of the region, at the price of disaffection among the Luriani. Overall, the outcome was a generally fairer system of competition between businesses and the emergence of many smaller corporations where previously a few big players had dominated market sectors. Many new firms and business groups now existed, along with remnants of the old order, which in some cases still possessed enormous assets.

The political and economic situation in Ley gradually stabilised over the next 50 years, with programmes to strengthen the Imperial Sector Fleet making slow headway. The Gateway region was a low priority for those controlling the Imperial Navy's budget, in particular very few new capital ships were assigned. The debate raged for many years over whether the available funds should be spent on warfighting assets or smaller, lower-capability vessels better suited to keeping the peace.

The peacekeeper faction argued that Ley – and therefore the largely fictional Domain of Gateway – faced no external threat. The Lords of Thunder were a source of worry but they were far off. Someday the domain would need a major fleet to deter or meet an attack but in the meantime it needed security and stability. Battleships were no use if raiders and pirates were interdicting the trade lanes. In addition, the stability created by a good security force would increase prosperity which would ultimately pay for the capital ships. This was a pretty good argument, although the warfighters pointed to the distant K'Kree and shook their heads.

In reality, there was only one way forward. Warship money went into patrol and security ships for the most part, with plans to build capital vessels endlessly deferred. One result is the Ley Sector Fleet of the Imperial Navy today has a different composition to the standard model; another was a series of controversies which contributed to the fall of the archduke in 1076.

Imperial attention was almost entirely absent from Gateway during these years, although some trading corporations maintained regular links. These became effectively mercantile ambassadors to the worlds and states of Gateway. Their position has never been formally ratified but provides a useful conduit for back-channels diplomacy. Since around 1040, the Galian Federation has been pursuing closer links with the Imperium, albeit in a haphazard manner. The first Imperial Trade Missions were set up in the Galian Federation in 1048 and two decades later a genuine discussion about Imperial basing rights began. However, this eventually came to nothing. It seems that trade is always welcome, especially high-technology goods, but enthusiasm for political links seems to wax and wane.

THE PLUNGE

By 1060, it seemed the politico-economic situation in Gateway Domain was under control. This, it turned out, was an over-optimistic illusion. The period from the late 1050s through to the end of the 1080s is sometimes referred to as The Plunge or The Overdue Plunge. Although the prognosis seemed good, there were serious cracks under the surface. The old guard of business owners and political figures who had suffered in the economic reforms at the end of the previous century had been replaced by new generations with ambitions of rebuilding their fortunes. The result was the emergence of the Ley Sector Commercial Alliance, which included some formerly big names and a few new faces. Conspicuously absent from it were the Luriani, who had been gradually edged out as a result of their opposition to Archduke Erechs.

The LSCA was more unified than the rest of the commercial sector and its members were willing to help one another out. Notably, they were willing to cause adverse economic circumstances in the short term. This had the effect of forcing some mid-sized independent firms out of business, whilst LSCA members propped one another up. The intent was to take advantage of the upturn when it came and in the meantime clear the field of competition.

Unfortunately for everyone concerned, the LSCA's emergence coincided with a demand from the emperor that the Archduke of Gateway start rebuilding a proper navy. Funds were offered but on a contribution-matching basis. A promise of lavish spending attracted a big investment and the main construction yards were expanded. Keels were laid down and everything appeared to be going to plan. However, locally raised funds were not available in time. The emperor's money went mostly on infrastructure, refurbishing yards that had been largely idle for decades and on a first round of major warships. Subsequent builds were deferred, orders reduced, and by 1065 the sector administration had to admit they could not meet their commitments.

The programme was not a total failure. Money trickled in and ships were commissioned but the new yards stood empty much of the time. Rather than boosting the local economies, the shipbuilders were forced into a cycle of hire-and-fire which weakened confidence and at times caused real disruption.

A second crisis struck in 1069, in the form of a huge political and legal scandal surrounding the Imperial Trade Missions in the Galian Federation. Some, or perhaps all, had been allegedly dealing in restricted

goods such as high-technology manufacturing equipment and military hardware. This sold for excellent prices to the Galians, who sold it on for even more. A flurry of lawsuits alleging regulations were being flouted or business was being conducted in an unfair manner provoked an investigation by the Imperial Ministry of Justice. The inquiry found many of the allegations were correct but also uncovered an illegal arms conduit providing hardware to groups aligned against the Lords of Thunder. Whilst popular opinion was in favour of such a move, some groups being armed were unsavoury or involved in peripheral activities that might destabilise Gateway. In addition, money intended to support warship building programmes was being funnelled into these projects.

At the same time, a series of social and political problems was coming to a head. The Luriani were increasingly disaffected and – rightfully – felt themselves to be victims of a generally negative policy on the part of the sector and domain administration. Skilled workers across the sector were suffering upheaval as they moved to take up lucrative contracts in the supposedly expanding shipbuilding industry then found themselves out of a job and far from home. This had a knock-on effect throughout the industries that fed the shipbuilders – everything from mining and heavy industry to precision engineering. When the archduke was found to have diverted shipbuilding money, support collapsed and a wave of unrest spread across the sector.

THE RECOVERY

In 1076, the archduke was removed from office and replaced by Count Brandon Minomoru of Daramm, a Verasti Dtareen who had steadfastly championed the Luriani cause. His reception was lukewarm in many areas but a policy of fair dealing and the subtle injection of Imperial money in the form of long-term loans gradually smoothed the situation out. By 1090, the Gateway Domain economy was stable and expanding at a modest rate. Those who liked their financial affairs to be a bit more exciting were directed into the Gateway Sector Project, a broad programme of private investment and local trans-border initiatives with the twin goals of increasing Imperial influence in the spinward end of Gateway and giving the hotheads a playground away from the serious business of rebuilding the Domain's fortunes.

For the next decade and a half, Ley enjoyed a period of stability and increasing prosperity, and the new archduke has become extremely popular. However, there are increasing fears that the Lords of Thunder might advance rapidly across Gateway. Rumours abound that their forces are massing for an invasion of the Renkard union. A small but extremely noisy minority is demanding the deployment of naval assets to protect the Union – defending ourselves in someone else's yard – although this is blatantly impracticable for multiple reasons. It is obviously only a matter of time before the K'Kree establish themselves in Gateway and begin pushing spinwards. No official position has been put forward by the archduke.

Meanwhile, there is no sign of unity among the polities of Gateway. In 1098, the Trindel Confederacy and the Viyard Concourse fought a war over possession of the world of Coralee. The Peace of Farnoc which ended the war did not contain an agreement on ownership of the world, which remains under occupation by the Viyard Concourse. Skirmishing continues between the Plavian League and the Hochiken People's Assembly and there are those who believe outright war is long overdue.

TIMELINE FOR THE TRAILING FRONTIER

-10000000	Proto-K'Kree appear.
-3000000	K'Kree begin to develop manifest intelligence.
-310000	Ancients arise.
-300000	Humans seeded throughout Charted Space by Ancients. Sydites and Luriani seeded on their homeworlds.
-250000	Luriani develop long-range sea travel.
-290000	Ancients civilisation collapses in Final War.
-150000	Luriani civilisations cover entire homeworld.
-120000	Sydites reach Iron Age.
-100000	K'Kree battle for survival versus carnivores begins. Luriani establish single world state.
-80000	K'Kree begin building cities.
-30000	K'Kree begin systematic extermination of carnivores on Kirur. Sydites at TL2.
-25000	Climate change on Sopater (Khuur) forces Sydites to develop technologically. Luriani develop agriculture and animal domestication.
-20000	Ancients warbots on Vland finally run down. Vilani civilisation begins to arise on Vland.
-15000	Glaciers retreat on Terra. Solomani civilisation begins to emerge on Terra.
-10,000	First K'Kree writings appear. Vilani begin space exploration. Solomani develop agriculture. Sydites establish single world state.
-9400	Vilani begin sublight colony missions.
-9310	Vilani encounter non-Vilani humans.
-9235	Vilani develop jump drive.
-8175	K'Kree begin to emerge as a world-state.
-7500	Vilani contact Luriani.
-7450	Luriani launch first spacecraft.
-7400	Luriani exploration of Daramm system begins.
-7200	Luriani launch first sublight migration ships.
-6970	K'Kree Law of Reason formulated.
-6000	Vilani Imperium border enters Ley Sector. Over 30 worlds now settled by sublight Luriani ships. Luriani become client state of Vilani Imperium.
-5450	Luriani gain jump drive technology.
-5435	Vilani Trade & Contact fleet passes through Luriani space.
-5430	Vilani develop jump-2 drive.
-5421	Vilani jump-2 battle fleet passes through Luriani space and into Ley sector.
-5402	Remnants of Vilani jump-2 fleet reach Vland.
-5400	Vilani begin Consolidation Wars.
-4700	Vilani Consolidation Wars reach Ley sector. Negotiations between Luriani and Vilani begin.
-4698	Hivers develop inferior jump drive.
-4600	Luriani military build-up alarms Vilani.
-4582	Vilani – Luriani war begins.
-4547	Last Luriani worlds surrender to Vilani after a long and bitter war.
-4546	The Luriani Year of Woe inflicted by Vilani investigators.
-4520	Solomani calendar begins (1 AD).
-4404	Vilani absorb Vega.
-4305	K'Kree unify Kirur, reach TL7.
-4288	K'Kree reach TL9, develop first grav drive. K'Kree begin war of extermination vs intelligent carnivores living on Kirrixur, the moon of Kirur.
-4212	Hivers develop superior jump drive.
-4167	K'Kree exterminate Kirrixur carnivores. K'Kree declare Axavktrr!xur, the Fundamental Principles of Survival.
-4142	K'Kree discover jump drive.
-4045	Vilani Consolidation Wars end. Ziru Sirka declared (1VI).
c.-4000	Vilani cease exploration.
-3986	Hivers encounter Ithklur.
-3500	Ziru Sirka reaches its greatest size.
-2559	Solomani space exploration begins.
-2460	Solomani establish bases throughout the solar system.
-2431	Solomani discover jump drive.
-2424	Solomani reach Barnard's Star.
-2422	Solomani contact Vilani (Ziru Sirka).

-2408	First Interstellar War.
-2398	Terran Confederation established.
-2347	Vilani fleets narrowly defeated at Battle of Terra.
-2346	Terran Confederation begins major reforms Terrans begin offensive operations against Ziru Sirka.
-2235	Nth Interstellar War begins.
-2219	Nth Interstellar War ends.
-2204	Terran Confederation dissolved. Second Imperium (Rule of Man) declared.
-2174	Second Imperium encounters Sydites. Sydites purchase jump-1 drive.
-2038	K'Kree occupy several Hiver client worlds, begin extermination of carnivores.
-2028	K'Kree and Hivers make direct contact. K'Kree/Hiver war begins.
-2013	K'Kree/Hiver War ends. K'Kree principle of Axavktrr!xur overturned.
-2000	Vilani traders encounter Zhodani.
-1932	Second Imperium recognises Luriani Cultural Region.
-1802	First Human/Hiver contact.
-1776	Rule of Man collapses. Long Night begins.
-1770	Matarishan Federation Established in Ley Sector.
-1700	Human explorers enter Gateway Region.
-1690	Terran Mercantile Community founded.
-1550	Matarishan Federation loses last jump-capable ships.
-1522	Long Night deepens.
-1511	Carlton colonised by Solomani.
-1110	Old Earth Union founded.
-650	Sylean Federation founded.
-500	Interstellar Corporations arise in Galastrian Trade Federation.
-312	Galastrian Metals founded.
-224	Gateway Station construction begins.
-200	Humans contact K'Kree.
-198	Gateway sector named.
-150	Corporate Sector Wars ongoing in Gateway sector.
-30	Cleon Zhunastu begins unifying Sylean Federation. Sylean scout encounters Luriani vessel beyond Luriani space.
-29	Second Luriani Protectorate declared.
-27	Contact made between dissident Syleans and Matarishan Federation. Federation begins to re-establish itself.
-16	Sylean Federation scouts enter Luriani space.
0	Third Imperium Founded. Cleon I crowned Emperor.
50	Third Imperium encounters Zhodani Economic depression in Gateway sector.
70	Imperials arrive in Gateway sector. Corporate Sector Wars end.
64	Imperial scouts enter Gateway sector.
73	Imperial vessels begin skirmishing with Sydymic Empire ships in Ley sector.
75	Imperial embassy established on Tharver.
76	Imperials begin Pacification Campaigns.
91	Arnaki Rebellion against Imperium begins.
93	Imperial-Luriani war begins.
96	Imperial-Luriani war ends; Second Luriani Protectorate absorbed into Imperium.
99	Arnaki Rebellion crushed.
100	Imperial/Sydymic war begins in earnest.
103	Imperial and K'Kree ambassadors meet on Mneonon.
120	Imperial-Sydymic war ends as Imperials pull back.
175	Julian War begins.
191	Julian War ends in stalemate. Imperial depots at Ley and Fornast sectors destroyed.
200	Formal absorption of Luriani into Imperium begins with Treaty of Daramm.
202	Second Luriani Cultural Region declared.
217	Second Luriani Cultural Region.
220	Luriani fully absorbed into Imperium, although with certain guarantees.
251	Gateway Workers' Rising.
252	Gateway Station renamed Gateway.
302	Revolt on Tharver. Galastrian Metals collapses.
305	Galian League founded.
320	Workers' revolt on Barclaron. The Collective founded.
420	Imperials complete First Survey of the Imperium.
424	Vanadian Cartel falls.
425	Hochiken Republic founded.

588	Terra incorporated into the Third Imperium.
589	First Frontier War begins (Imperium/ Zhodani).
590	Military coup creates Hochiken People's Assembly.
604	First Frontier War ends. Imperial Civil War begins. Fleet assets withdrawn from Ley. Sydites begin operations against Imperial worlds.
612	Galian/Hochiken 'Heptad War'.
615	Second Frontier War (Imperial/Zhodani) begins.
620	Second Frontier War ends.
622	Imperial Civil War ends.
624	Imperial X-boat service established.
640	Imperial fleets return in force to Ley sector and begin counteroffensive against Sydites.
672	Imperial fleets retake lost territory and push into Sydymic systems.
673	Sydites attempt to sue for peace.
675	Imperial forces take Sopater. Sydymic War ends.
679	Solomani power broken at the Imperial court.
704	Solomani Autonomous Region established.
750	Viyard Alliance joins the Collective.
752	First Galian/Viyard war begins.
754	Battle of Coralee.
758	First Galian/Viyard war ends with the Treaty of Umbrin. Viyard Concourse established.
778	Sydymic Empire remnants form Khuur League.
800	Piracy increases dramatically in Gateway region. Imperials begin Psionic Suppressions.
850	Pirates from Gateway sector begin to raid into Ley sector.
871	Solomani Confederation established.
874	K'Kree leader L'lluii!pri'vguurlg embraces philosophy of Axavktrr!xur.
885	Lords of Thunder founded.
908	Pirates raid Tavarand.
910	Galian Trade League begins to fragment.
911	Galian Civil War begins.
912	Plavian League created from breakaway Galian worlds.
915	Trindel declares independence from Galian Trade League.
918	Galian Trade League collapses. Galian Civil War ends.
925	Galian Federation founded.
940	Tensions rise between Imperials and Solomani.
950	Solomani Autonomous Region dissolved.
960	Mercantile Concord increases use of its influence.
979	Third Frontier War begins (Imperial/ Zhodani).
984	Mercantile Concord begins policy of appeasement towards Lords of Thunder.
986	Third Frontier War ends.
990	Solomani Rim War begins (Imperial/ Solomani Confederation).
992	Marcus Aaron Erechs installed as Archduke of Gateway. Gateway Domain Capital moved to Annapabar. Great Free-For-All begins in Ley.
1002	Solomani Rim War Ends.
1021	Former Archduke Nells dies.
1029	Great Free-For-All ends in Ley.
1048	First Imperial Trade Missions set up in the Galian Federation.
1050	Luriani power in the sector reaches its minimum.
1059	Ley Sector Commercial Alliance begins to emerge.
1061	Emperor Paulo III demands increased warship spending in Gateway Domain.
1065	Ley sector officials admit they cannot meet their naval construction commitments.
1069	Imperial Trade Mission Scandal.
1076	Archduke of Gateway deposed and replaced.
1090	Gateway Domain economy declared stable and capable of long-term growth. Gateway Sector Project begins.
1098	Clovian War between the Viyard Concourse and the Trindel Confederacy.

PEOPLE OF THE TRAILING FRONTIER

The Trailing Frontier is generally considered to be, politically speaking, two very different regions. It might be more accurate to say it is multiple different areas, one of which is much larger than the others and contains sub-regions. Imperial citizens typically use the simplistic Imperial and not-Imperial definition whilst non-Imperials or those who travel around a lot are more likely to acknowledge the greater variety. Political reality has far more influence on local conditions than species, although some species are polities unto themselves.

Most sentient people in the region are humans of one sort or another. Various sub-groups are represented, some of which are native to the region and rarely encountered elsewhere. Genetically engineered human groups pose something of a quandary to those seeking a simple and clear-cut description. Some are interfertile with 'mainstream' humans and some are not. Others are interfertile with some other engineered human variants, or can breed with difficulty and a high chance of defects.

The easiest way to cut through all of this scientific confusion is to ignore it. Political and social groupings are much easier to categorise and will generally suffice for most purposes. This is particularly the case when a social grouping includes members of various human variant races. The grouping generally thought of as the Luriani, for example, actually contains people of Luriani, Terran and Vilani descent. What matters to most outsiders are their cultural behaviour and economic preferences rather than the details of their gene sequences.

A number of non-human races of Terran origin are also represented in the Trailing Frontier. These include Dolphins and the Ursa, a race of genetically uplifted bears. In some cases these non-humans live in mixed communities with humans; in others they are separate. One common mistake made by Travellers is to assume that all members of a particular species must belong to the same social or political grouping. This is absolutely not the case. There are Dolphins in the region who consider themselves Luriani, others who belong to local political groupings – mixed and all-Dolphin – who

TRAVEL ZONES

The Travellers' Aid Society, or TAS, uses a system of codes to indicate danger to Travellers. Most systems are considered green and have no code assigned. These systems are by no means entirely safe but the absence of a special code indicates that no unusual hazards exist. However, TAS has only a minor operation outside the Imperium so codes cannot be relied upon beyond the Imperial borders. A few worlds do have codes assigned but many dangerous localities do not. Travellers are advised to treat any system outside the Imperium as green-to-amber at least.

Amber Zones

TAS uses an Amber Zone to show that a world is unusually dangerous. The reasons vary considerably, from local war or unrest, through harsh laws to dangerous animals or weather. Travellers are advised to use caution when visiting an Amber Zone.

Red Zones

Red Zones indicate worlds to which access is denied or subject to very heavy restrictions. Within the Imperium, Red Zones are interdicted by the Navy or Scout service for safety, political or cultural reasons. Beyond the Imperium, Red Zones are worlds which TAS considers extremely dangerous to visit. A Red designation might also indicate local interdiction even if TAS has no information on the world.

do not get along at all with Dolphins from other groups. There are also various non-human, non-Terran species present. These include the Droyne, who have homeworlds all over Charted Space and possibly beyond it and species local to the region.

HUMANS IN THE TRAILING FRONTIER

The majority of humans in Gateway can trace their ancestry back to colony missions launched during the Rule of Man or the beginning of the Long Night. Even those groups that retained or regained interstellar travel would only encounter other Solomani. As a result, the bloodlines of the humans in Gateway are more or less pure Solomani. This has some political significance, as certain groups in Solomani space consider it their right and duty to assist in the affairs of their distant cousins. This idea has little traction in Gateway itself, however. The humans who settled there went their own way a long time ago. They might accept assistance from the Solomani Confederation if it were offered but for the most part Gateway humans would wonder why the Confederation would help them and what strings were attached.

Similarly, the human populations in Gateway have diverged from the culture of 'Old Earth'. Vestiges remain but hundreds of years in a new environment have reshaped the values and traditions of the settlers. As a general rule, society is cosmopolitan and accepting of differences among humans and aliens, although there are prejudices born of experience. For example, most humans in the trailingward end of Gateway are fearful of the K'Kree and worry in a vague manner about the possibility of conflict. This translates for the most part to wariness rather than hate but there are some groups who have had bad experiences and harbour enmity as a result.

It is not uncommon for mercenaries or idealistic volunteers to fight against the Lords of Thunder. Those that return spread first-hand tales of K'Kree atrocities against meat-eaters. For their part, the Lords of Thunder would say they are merely exterminating vermin as is right, proper and natural. The result is a mistrust and apprehension directed towards the K'Kree which could be construed as being along racial lines but which stems from demonstrated behaviour and assumed intentions rather than blind prejudice.

Humans in Ley and the spinwardmost parts of Gateway are generally of mixed blood. There are some more or less pure Solomani populations and a smaller number of pure Vilani but most humans are of what might be termed Imperial stock. Their ancestry includes many centuries of interbreeding between strands of Humaniti; mainly the Solomani and Vilani but also smaller subgroups and populations isolated for a time then recontacted. This mixed ancestry does not preclude cultural affinity for the old Solomani or Vilani cultures and indeed there are planetary populations whose culture is heavily based on one or the other even if the bloodlines of the population are mixed.

Most human societies in the Trailing Frontier have recognisable vestiges of the old Solomani or Vilani cultures. For the most part Galanglic is spoken as the main language or at least as a *lingua franca* among the worlds and peoples of the region. However, dialects and local cultures vary considerably. It is entirely possible to encounter groups whose culture is clearly related to that of an alien race, such as a civilisation of humans that follow the K'Kree way of life or who have been heavily influenced by Vargr culture. The opposite is also possible; aliens who have a very Terran outlook due to centuries of cultural pollution.

The Referee can use this cultural diversity to make the worlds that Travellers visit unique and interesting; it can also be used to create fascinating characters and opportunities for Travellers to put their foot in it. Cultures and societies should always make sense; that is, they must be internally consistent – but that does not mean they have to be comprehensible to an outsider.

A variety of cultures exist within Ley, although most outsiders would consider the whole region to be overwhelmingly Imperial-Standard other than within the Luriani Cultural Region. Ley has the feel of an old or internal Imperial region rather than a frontier for most of its extent. As a Traveller reaches the outer trailing-rimward corner this changes somewhat but for the most part Ley might as well be deep in the Imperial heartland. The K'Kree and even the polities of Gateway are distant and of relatively low importance to the average citizen of Ley.

Some variant human races are represented in the Trailing Frontier. These include the Sydites, the Luriani and the Jonkeereen.

THE JONKEEREEN

The Jonkeereen are the product of genetic manipulation carried out by the Third Imperium. The experiment was a success, in that it created a species of humans adapted to extremely arid environments who could breed true. The first population was introduced to Jonkeer in Deneb sector, where they thrived. Since then, groups of Jonkeereen have been seeded on a number of worlds including some in the Trailing Frontier. This was not always popular; Jonkeereen have rebelled on occasion against forced transplantation or after being placed on a world, and there is a small but vocal lobby group which demands better treatment for their species.

On average, Jonkeereen are tall and slender with dark skin. In addition to being able to shed heat effectively, Jonkeereen retain water extremely well. This translates to a need for only about 20% of the water required by a standard human. Similarly, Jonkeereen digestion is excellent at getting nutrition out of almost any kind of food. Their eyes are protected by an additional membrane which keeps out sand or dust and acts as a UV filter. However, Jonkeereen are short-lived by the standards of other humans, averaging 60–65 years.

There are official populations of Jonkeereen in the Trailing Frontier, often dwelling alongside normal humans and working in jobs requiring tolerance of desert conditions. It is not known how many Jonkeereen have quietly drifted away from the places they were settled and created their own unofficial communities. Their ability to survive in the harshest of environments has at times enabled them to simply walk away from the technological assistance it was assumed they would come to rely upon. These fringe populations for the most part just want to be left alone but will trade with friendly starfarers or fight interlopers if they have to. There are also rumours of mixed victims of genetic engineering communities which welcome those who feel they have been wronged. In such places it is possible to find uplifted apes, ursa and other people engineered from animal species as well as modified humans such as Sydites, Luriani and Jonkeereen. Curiously, Vargr tend not to gravitate to such communities. The reasons for this are not known, and asking a Vargr will get only a puzzled look and an inquiry as to why someone would think they identified with misfits rather than their own kind.

JONKEEREEN

Characteristics

Jonkeereen Travellers have the following modifiers to their characteristics: END +2.

Traits

Jonkeereen Travellers all possess the following traits.

Desert Survival: Jonkeereen can breathe most tainted atmospheres without a mask due to their engineered ability to filter out or tolerate most impurities. They gain DM+3 to all Survival checks in a desert or similar hot environment. This DM can also be applied at the Referee's discretion to tasks that would be impaired by desert conditions such as dust or light with a strong UV component, offsetting the difficulties imposed by such conditions.

THE LURIANI

The Luriani are easily categorised as humans genetically adapted for an aquatic environment. As soon as inspection moves past this simplistic point, the situation becomes a lot more complex. The Luriani can mean one of two things; either people who are generically Luriani or members of the Luriani culture. The latter is actually made up of genetic Luriani plus humans of both Solomani and Vilani descent who were absorbed into their culture. Physical information relates to the Luriani race; social data applies, with some variation, to all people within the Luriani culture.

The Luriani were modified by the Ancients to suit a water world. They have webbed hands and feet, and layers of fat to retain heat in cold water. Luriani also have a greater volume of blood than a human of equivalent mass and can regulate their blood supply. This enables a Luriani to reduce blood flow to less vital organs, permitting longer underwater action and even survival in an airless environment for 20–30 minutes. Luriani are considered almost capable of breeding with other humans. Without scientific assistance the chance of a child is very low but it has been known. Even with assistance, it is difficult, although partnerships of a genetic Luriani and a non-Luriani are quite common. Social convention allows for relationships outside the partnership subject to certain rules and it is considered very impolite to wonder how a particular couple produced their children.

LURIANI

Characteristics

Luriani Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics: DEX +1, END +1, SOC -2

Traits

All Luriani Travellers have the Histrionics trait. Genetically Luriani have the Aquatic Adaptation trait.

Aquatic Adaptation: Trueborn Luriani can dive to a depth of 500 metres (assuming normal atmospheric pressure) without artificial aids and can survive without breathing for up to an hour. This becomes increasingly unpleasant after 20 minutes or so, however. They gain DM+2 on all Survival checks made in an aquatic environment and DM+2 on all checks involving swimming or underwater activity.

Histrionics: Members of Luriani culture (even Mmarislusant, to a lesser degree) are prone to displays of emotion and sudden outbursts. Any time a Luriani wants to conceal their feelings, DM-2 applies to any Persuade or similar checks. DM+2 applies to any situation where the Luriani wants to draw attention to themselves. This does not make them more persuasive, only more noticeable. For example, a Luriani actor could steal the scene with a sudden outpouring of emotion but that does not mean their portrayal of King Lear will impress critics.

Luriani are extremely emotional people. Although society is extremely polite, outbursts and displays of affection are the norm. Friendships are tactile, with hugs and kisses – and an amount of snuggling-up and casual non-sexual touching that can make outsiders uncomfortable – an essential part of social interaction. Flouncing out as a way of ending an argument is something of an art form. This makes many observers believe the Luriani as individuals and as a society are unstable but this is far from the truth. Expressing emotions is healthy, and allows others to accurately gauge the seriousness of the situation. At least, those who understand the Luriani can do so. Those who 'get it' have a chance to take appropriate action but those who do not may be alarmed and escalate the situation instead of bringing it under control.

About 35% of Luriani society are not genetically Luriani but humans of either Solomani or Vilani descent. These joined the Luriani at different periods of history, making themselves useful and therefore welcome. Those of Terran descent are known as Verasti Dtareen. They tend to have a very Luriani personality and temperament, and make up a disproportionate percentage of Luriani military and naval forces. Those originally of Vilani descent are known as Mmarislusant. They tend to be less emotional than other segments of society and retain many of the trappings of traditional Vilani society. However, where the Luriani have a deep mistrust of anything Vilani – for very good historical reasons – the Mmarislusant are a trusted part of Luriani culture.

THE SYDITES

The Sydites are one of the most divergent of all the human sub-species. They show clear signs of genetic engineering, being very large (2.5 metres tall on average) and possessing four arms. Sydites are unimaginative and not great thinkers, although they cannot really be described as stupid – they did manage to reach the stars and create a lasting empire, after all. However, the strangeness of the Sydite body form, plus their slab-like, ugly features, causes many humans to dismiss them as lumbering brutes. Sydites cannot interbreed with other human species or subspecies, as their genetic makeup is very different.

The Sydites were modified by the Ancients as workers or perhaps expendable warriors. The project does not appear to have been a great success, however. Although the Sydites can breed true and even created a modestly powerful interstellar state, their physiology is rather awkward. The upper pair of arms is larger and more muscular and can apply greater force, whilst the lower ones are intended for fine work. However, the muscle groups that operate both sets are interlinked. As a result, it is hard for a Sydite to make movements or apply strength with the lower arms without moving the upper ones as well. Sydites have a characteristic 'fold the lower' gesture whereby they lock their lower arms in place, gripping one another across the torso, whilst they undertake fine work with their upper hands. The same gesture is used symbolically before embarking on any task requiring concentration or thought.

Small enclaves of Sydites have been founded throughout the region but for the most part they are confined to a region around their homeworld of Sopater (which is called Khuur by everyone but Sydites). This was once the capital of a considerable

interstellar empire destroyed by the Third Imperium. It was replaced by a trade federation known as the Khuur League.

Sydite Society

The Sydites were never intended to think for themselves all that much. They were to be workers, not leaders, and suffered badly after being abandoned by their Ancient creators. This had the effect of naturally selecting for superior intelligence and leadership ability – as far as the Sydites possessed these traits – and kickstarted a gradual increase in intellectual capability which has never really stopped. In short, the Sydites are becoming smarter – albeit at an extremely slow rate.

Organisational structures tend to be personal rather than formal. A Sydite who is a good leader will attract followers and may in turn pledge support to a higher leader. Superficially, Sydite society has a lot in common with the Vargr. However, loyalty runs deep among

SYDITES

Characteristics

Sydites Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics: STR +2, END +2, DEX -2, INT -3, EDU -3.

In addition, when working with the upper limbs a Sydite's STR gains +2. When undertaking fine work with the lower limbs, DEX gains +2, offsetting their DEX penalty.

Traits

Sydites have the Resilient trait and most have the Plodding Along trait. Travellers will not have this trait, at the Referee's discretion, and nor will those in a leadership position.

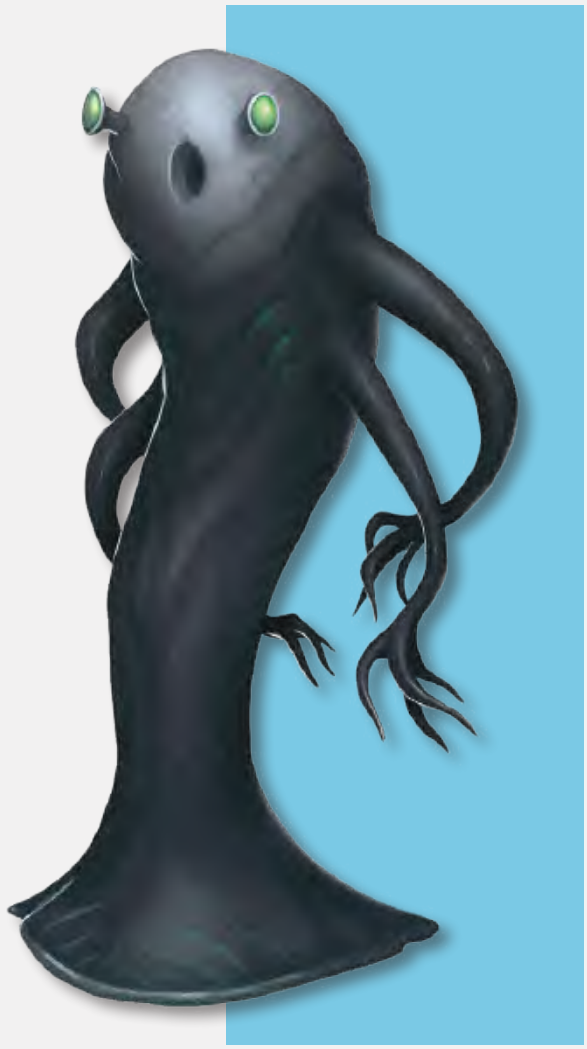
Plodding Along: Sydites are unimaginative and slow to work through the process of figuring out that 'something needs to be done… I know what it is!'. As a result, they are likely to just go about their obvious tasks at the expense of anything requiring organisation or leadership. Any Sydite nearby will realise the fire has to be put out and try to do it but organising an effective team is beyond the capabilities of most. Sydites with this trait suffer DM-4 on Leadership or Tactics checks. Conversely, they will often stick at a task long after others would have quit – simply because they lack the initiative to give up. In a situation where a Sydite is plugging away at a necessary task, DM+4 applies to checks to see if they avoid becoming demoralised or discouraged. This includes morale checks in combat.

Resilient: Sydites are big, with large and powerful muscles. This makes them more resistant to harm than most human-type species. Sydites are considered to have one point of natural armour (Protection +1) which applies against most physical damage. They are particularly resistant to electric shocks, heat and cold, and gain DM+2 on checks to avoid or reduce damage from these sources. This can be translated into an additional Protection +1 against attacks of this sort if appropriate.

the Sydite people and support, once given, is rarely withdrawn. Sydites will carry out a task they have agreed to perform, to the death if necessary. They are fatalistic about this – if their choices lead them to disaster they will go to their doom with grim resignation.

It is probable this attitude goes all the way back to the original abandonment. Those Sydites who could see what needed to be done and could get others to work with them were the literal saviours of their species. Even today a 'leader-doer' is a figure of reverence and deep respect as Sydites know these people hold the fate of their species in their hands. This reverence may or may not be extended to outsiders who hold high rank. The Sydites cannot understand how merely being born to the right family or having a lot of money somehow makes a person admirable and someone who is not admirable is not a leader. Outsiders must earn trust and respect by their actions and few have ever done so.

All organisations and communities are built according to this groups of groups model but it manifests itself in different ways depending on local conditions. Large communities or organisations can come to resemble the more formal versions used by other species but are capable of breaking down into small teams at any time. This makes Sydite society extremely resilient; so long as there is someone capable of leading there are plenty of followers willing to fatalistically get the job done, no matter the odds.



NON-HUMAN RACES

Several species of sentient non-humans exist in the Trailing Frontier. Some are native to worlds in the region whilst others may have migrated or set up enclaves. Others might be encountered visiting or passing through on business.

THE AKEED

The Akeed are native to the world of Akeen in Gateway. They rule a multi-world state called the Akeena Union, in which many humans live happily as partners of the Akeed. Humans often describe Akeed as lovably yucky and get along well with them. Akeed are highly intelligent and sociable. Humans find their damp, slimy appearance unpleasant at first, although their natural smell is rather pleasing to most people. Their sharp wit and irreverent sense of humour usually win over those who interact with the Akeed for any length of time.

Akeed are very alien creatures, who derive nourishment directly from the minerals found in soil and water around them. Akeed physiology is thus rather strange. The lower body is a boneless blob, rather like the foot of a snail or slug, but rounder than that of a snail. The upper body, containing the brain and other important organs, bulges upward from the centre of this foot. The upper body is also the base for two pairs of tentacles on each side, which end in four boneless fingers. The head of an Akeed is protected by a cartilaginous case. The eyes are on the side, semi-extended on short and broad stalk/protectors. Akeed have no sense of smell or taste, nor a mouth as such, although their breathing hole can make intelligible sounds and – to the amazement of many observers – Akeed are excellent singers.

Akeed feed by drawing up nutrients from the soil through openings in the base of the foot. They can propel themselves slowly through water by pulsing the foot and much faster for short periods by drawing in water and squirting it out under pressure. It is not known whether Akeed can breathe water or they store oxygen in their tissues but they can remain submerged for long periods; how long is unknown to humans.

DEBATES AND MEDIATION

When two Akeed want to settle something they debate for hours or days, sometimes while doing other things or with breaks caused by necessary activities. The tone of such a debate may be irreverent, serious, offhand, intense or just plain silly. What seems to matter most is the ability to keep on dragging up vaguely related arguments or quibbles without straying beyond a vague and elastic limit of relevance. The Akeed that first runs out of arguments or who first mentions an argument that falls outside the bounds of relevance, loses.

Akeed are also excellent mediators, although their approach is a little unusual. Quite often, an Akeed mediator will gather the envoys from both parties together, then distract them with jokes, puns, amusing little songs and sudden interruptions or quibbles with the minutiae of their language, until the envoys become obsessed with reaching an agreement despite the mediator. Some observers believe that the Akeed are masters at drawing the best out of people by subtle and rather bizarre means. Others are of the opinion they are just having a joke at the expense of the rest of the galaxy.

AKEED

Characteristics

Akeed Travellers have the following modifiers applies to their characteristics: STR -2, END -2, INT +1

Traits

Akeed Travellers all possess the following traits.

Akeed Debate: Akeed receive DM+2 on all checks to argue a point or convince someone they are right. This ability can be creatively stretched to other situations, such as confounding investigators questioning the Akeed. Where two parties are trying to reach a settlement mediated by an Akeed, DM+2 applies to checks made with the intention of creating a mutually fair and agreeable outcome.

Akeed Friendship: An Akeed may attempt to form a close bond with a human or Vargr. Only one attempt can be made on a given person and only one at a time. The Akeed must interact with the target for several (2D) hours, not necessarily all in one go. At the end of this time, the Akeed may make a Difficult (10+) Persuade check. If the target is unwilling, their INT modifier is applied to this check as a negative DM. If successful, that person develops a bond with the Akeed which will never be forgotten. This is similar to a deep friendship but more compulsive. The target will always miss his Akeed friend when they are apart and cannot bear to see the Akeed come to harm. Akeed apparently feel a similar bond for their alien friend and will be genuinely happiest in their company. This translates to a blanket DM+1 to all checks which benefit the friend. If the Traveller wants to act against them or let them come to harm, they must make an Average (8+) INT check to convince themselves this is the correct course of action.

Akeed stand about 75 centimetres high and can surge on their foot to a stable height of about 1.25 metres, and a little higher for short periods. They cannot move while surging up, however. Movement is slow; 4m per round. Akeed cannot traverse vertical faces but can stick to a steep slope of up to 70° (so long as the surface is smooth, such as a starship hull) and move at 1m per round with no check necessary. The upper body does have some sort of cartilaginous skeletal structure, plus bands of erectile tissue that allow the Akeed to bend and twist in any direction. While amazingly flexible, this structure is rather light, making them somewhat weak.

Little is known about the Akeed social or governmental apparatus. Most visitors to their worlds interact with humans, however it is thought that the Akeed have underwater cities where millions or even billions reside in some unusual but harmonious way. Akeed are pleasant, social people who normally settle disputes by means of long arguments that continue until someone admits defeat. They rarely allow a situation to deteriorate to the point of conflict and most actual fighting done by the Union is undertaken by the human population. While they argue among themselves in a

way that seems arbitrary and more dependent upon staying power than on actually being right, Akeed understand humans well enough to act as an effective mediator in most circumstances and are sometimes hired to help resolve disputes.

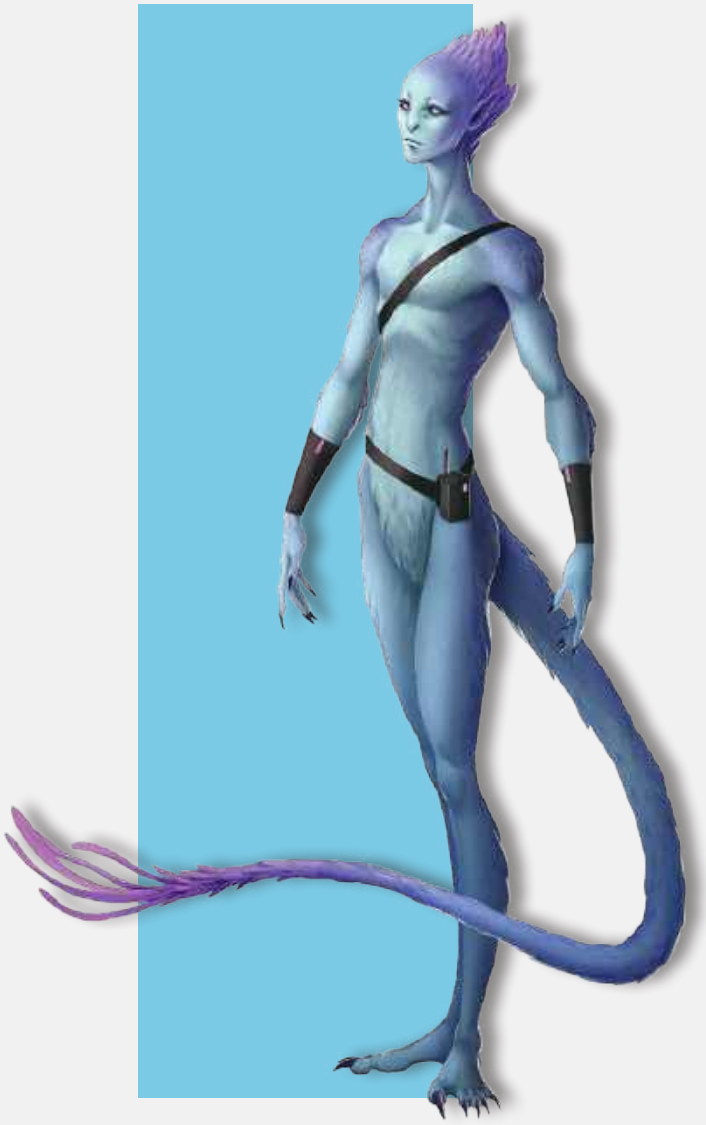
THE CAPRY (REMNANTS)

The Capry are native to the world now known as Basternevis in Gateway. They are bipedal and generally humanoid in appearance but covered in soft feathers and possessing a prehensile tail. This ends in a curious appendage which appears to be a cluster of brightly coloured feathers of unusual density. These feather-fingers can grip and manipulate objects, although not strongly. The tail is often used to pick up small items of food and bring them to the individual's mouth whilst they work with their two conventional hands. Capry are smaller and more lightly built than humans, typically standing around 1.4–1.6 metres high.

The Capry have three biological sexes, each of which is predisposed to a given mindset and physical characteristics. Females tend to be dextrous and technically minded, whilst big males are physically robust and powerfully built for their size. Small males are agile and smart but in an abstract, scientific manner rather than the technical abilities of the females. These are trends rather than certainties and Capry do not seem to have any hard-and-fast rules about which sex performs what sort of task.

Females require fertilisation by both male sexes in order to conceive, after which they bear live young. Families are typically complex groupings of pairs – usually a female and one of the male types but sometimes one of each male sex. Pairings of two Capry of the same sex are almost unknown. A pairing is usually a lifetime partnership but it is not the same as a family. At least two pairs are needed for a family and more typically three to five pairs of Capry form a grouping. This is a solemn and important matter, perhaps best considered as a marriage-of-married-pairs. Recreational sex among members of a family is commonplace but since a mating to produce children requires three Capry, breeding is a more deliberate business.

The complex family structure of the Capry played a major part in their downfall. Possibly assisted by human colonists, their society advanced rapidly to gain a starfaring capability sometime during the late Long Night period. Capry established colonies on a few worlds but these grew slowly. Meanwhile, their explosive industrial progress began to cause severe damage to their homeworld. As food supplies were increasingly destroyed, the Capry fought over what was left. In so doing they further wrecked their world and destroyed their ability to construct the starships which might have permitted some to escape.



Today the Capry are extinct on their homeworld and most of the colonies have failed. Two thousand years have covered the ruins and craters where cities once stood, although traces remain here and there. The surviving population are scattered on worlds across Gateway or in small enclaves at starports. Their small population is still in decline and may have already passed the threshold for inevitable extinction. In the centuries left to them, groups of Capry and the occasional individual make the best life they can, sometimes serving aboard starships bound for far-off places.

CAPRY

Characteristics

Female Capry Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics: STR-3, DEX+2, END-2, INT+1
Big Male Capry Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics: STR -1, END +1
Small Male Capry Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics: STR -4, DEX +3, END -3, EDU +2

Traits

Capry Travellers all possess the following traits.

Liberating Fatalism: The knowledge their species is doomed could cause an individual Capry to despair but they have developed an incredible ability to distract themselves from the prospect. A Capry may choose three areas of special interest, which can change over time, and gain DM+1 any time they carry out a task benefiting from their near-obsession with this area of interest. That might be diplomatically smoothing over a dispute with a loved one, building a model starship out of matchsticks, programming the most perfect orbital-mechanics model ever produced, or any other appropriate activity at the Referee's discretion.

Third Hand: All Capry can use their feather-fingers for simple tasks like eating or opening a door but they are not strong enough to wield a weapon or support the Capry's weight alone. The third hand is an assistant for the other two rather than a complexly functional appendage. Whenever a Capry can benefit from having a third hand to steady something or assist in a task – for example by holding a component in place during a delicate repair – DM+2 may be applied.

Many Capry find the prospect of annihilation strangely liberating; their species is doomed and there is nothing they can do about it so they experience as much of the cosmos as they are able without ties to homeworld or pressure to have children. Ever since the Capry were encountered by human explorers after the Long Night they have been known as the Remnants, as their general situation was obvious. Few know the full story, however, including many Capry.

THE DROASHAV

Droashav are six-limbed pseudoreptilians found on Trevannic in Gateway. It is likely the Droashav are not native to Trevannic since there are no other six-limbed creatures on the planet and no evidence to suggest the Droashav evolved there. There are also folk tales among the Droashav of how their ancestors wandered among the stars. It is thus possible that other enclaves of Droashav exist somewhere, possibly possessing high technology and starships.

Droashav stand 1.5–2 metres tall on their hind limbs, with two pairs of arms. Droashav feet are clawed and can be used in close combat. Their greeny-brown hide provides a measure of natural protection and Droashav are generally tough and uncomplaining. The majority of their population live as TL1 desert nomads, with a TL4 civilisation in the northern reaches of their planet. A few enclaves of higher-tech Droashav also exist, often in mixed communities with humans. It is not clear whether the humans brought technology to Trevannic or if the

DROASHAV

Characteristics

Droashav Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics: STR +2, DEX -1, END +3, INT -1

Traits

Droashav Travellers all possess the following Traits.

Natural Defences: All Droashav gain Protection +1 due to their tough hide and generally resilient nature. They can use their claws in close combat to deliver 1D+2 damage.

Droashav somehow developed a small technological base without distributing it. Droashav items tend to be optimised for them rather than for humans, suggesting at least some of their tech is homegrown or derived from remnants of a fallen civilisation.

It is suspected by some scientists that the Droashav might be related to the K'Kree in some way, since they have a similar six-limbed physiology. Others have gone as far as to suggest the Droashav are the original G'naak thought to have been exterminated by the K'Kree. If so, the Lords of Thunder would make it a priority to find and destroy the last of their ancient foes. How the Droashav escaped the genocidal campaign of the K'Kree remains a mystery, with most proponents of the theory suggesting generation ships of some kind.

THE FAAR

The Faar are native to Alphaaric in the Gateway sector. They are, broadly speaking, humanoid but are clearly not related to Humaniti in any way. Coming from a high-gravity world, the Faar are squat blocks of muscle and heavy bone who only rarely reach a height of 1.7 metres, 1.5 metres being the average for males and females alike. They are otherwise humanoid but their internal structure is subtly different. In particular, Faar hips and shoulders are constructed differently to those of humans. Faar have very pale skin and no body hair of any kind, and their eyes are also very pale, usually blue or green. They are warm-blooded, bear live young and have two sexes.

The Faar have a high-technology society but are content to remain on their homeworld. Individual Faar do travel, for example to deal personally with a business matter, but as a species they have no interest in space or interstellar travel. Some, who claim to have insider knowledge, say the Faar are deeply frightened of something 'out there' and seek to hide on their world rather than confront the terrifying mysteries of the universe. Faar are not particularly talkative and away from Alphaaric become even more close-mouthed and single-minded about their business, as if they cannot wait to get home.

Faar technology is greatly superior to most of that available in Gateway. They trade electronics and recreational technology with a few select groups, mainly traders from the Galian Federation. They

FAAR

Characteristics

Faar Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics:
STR+1, END+1, DEX-1.

Traits

Faar Travellers, who are rare, all possess the following traits

Closed Book: Away from home, Faar are taciturn and rather unfriendly. They are difficult to read by non-Faar. Thus, all skills involving understanding a Faar's reactions or emotions, including psionics, suffer DM-2.

Homesickness: A Faar who must spend any time away from home, even at Faarview, is prone to bouts of intense homesickness. Every 2D days they must make an Average (8+) END check or fall into melancholy. This applies a blanket DM-1 to all tasks not connected with immediate danger or survival. The homesickness lasts 1D days.

never sell weapon systems or starship components. Technology is generally geared towards supporting a comfortable and pleasant lifestyle. Outsiders who have visited Alphaaric claim the Faar are a hedonistic people, with a great love of art, music and theatre, who spend as much time as possible enjoying themselves. They are said to work very efficiently to get work done, so they can get on with the serious business of enjoying life to the full.

The Alphaaric system is also home to a sizeable human population, who live in an orbital city named Faarview. Faarview orbits Mashan, the system's primary gas giant, rather than Farr itself. Although only a short hop by interplanetary shuttle, most visitors do not go to Alphaaric itself but meet with humans and Faar representatives on Faarview.

UPLIFTED SPECIES

A number of species of Terran animal have been uplifted to full sentience, mostly by Solomani scientists during the Rule of Man. As the Rule of Man collapsed into the Long Night, colonies founded with the assistance of these species went their own way and in some cases the uplifted species came to be the dominant sentient species on a particular planet. In other cases, the uplifted beings created their own society away from humans, and occasionally truly integrated civilisations were created.

While the uplifted species retain the physical characteristics of their parent species, they now breed true, and are generally as intelligent as any human. Some social characteristics carry over from the animal instincts of the uplifted species but for the most part they have fully developed societies adapted to their local conditions.

The Solomani are known to have also attempted genetic manipulation of humans beyond what was necessary to fit them to harsh environments. Reports of a gene war between humans and some sort of 'supermen' persist, although even within the Solomani Confederation little is known about exactly what happened, outside of secret government archives. It is thought the Solomani became nervous of any species that could replace or supplant humans in their normal environment – the so-called 'supermen', the Apes and the Ursa, among others – and took steps to eradicate them. These efforts were not 100 percent successful in all cases. It can be assumed the Rule of Man-era Solomani did not feel threatened by Dolphins and Orca, since these species have become quite widespread.

APES

The Solomani uplifted a number of species of Terran ape to partial or full sentience. However, few communities survived the Long Night and thus ape colonies are very rare. Some may exist in a wild or primitive state in undeveloped regions of some worlds.

DOLPHINS AND ORCA

Foremost among the uplifted animals were Terran dolphins. A number of worlds still have large numbers of dolphins living in their seas, sometimes integrated with an aquatic or semi-aquatic human society. Dolphins like most humans but tend to react badly to Luriani. Most cannot explain why; they simply feel a subconscious discomfort in the presence of Luriani people. Luriani do not feel any such emotion, although

some find dolphin voices incredibly irritating and their sonar songs inane. Dolphins normally live in large extended-family groups and are prone to wandering around the seas of their homeworlds. They naturally find it rather difficult to travel offworld, although special travel tanks are available to those who have to undertake a journey.

Solomani engineers also uplifted a large number of Orca for much the same reasons as dolphins. Orca are less friendly than dolphins and tend to live apart from humans. They are in general not unwilling to co-operate with land-dwelling creatures but neither do they have much interest in developing relations with non-aquatic beings. Orca get along as well with Luriani humans as with any others – in other words, they are only distantly courteous but have no natural antipathy.

URSA

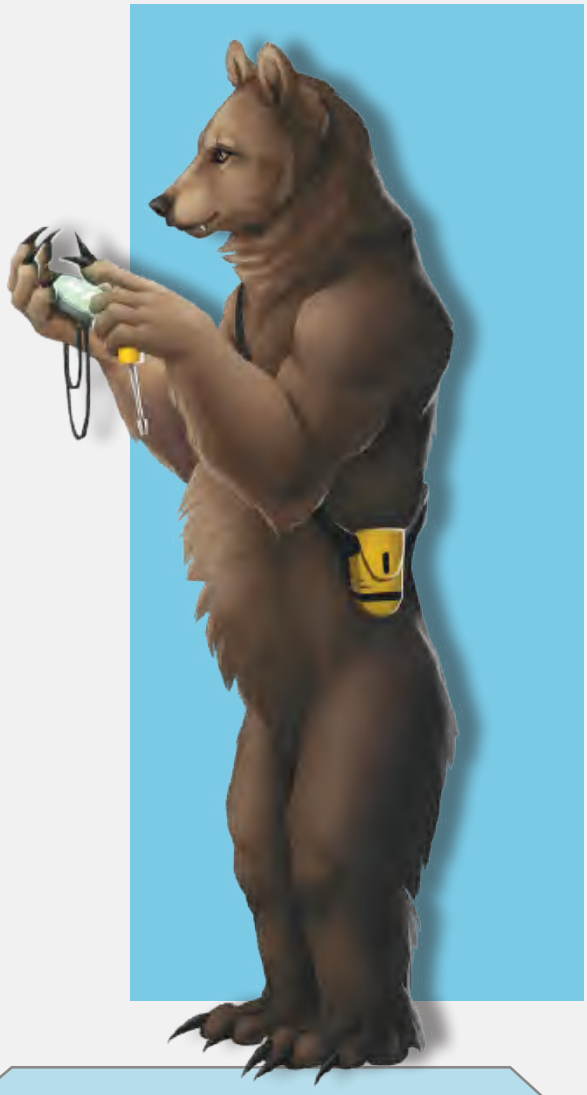
Uplifted from the Terran brown bear, Ursa are large and powerful but few in number. Adapted for colonisation of high-gravity worlds, the Ursa have a particularly unfortunate history. Feeling the Ursa project was a dead end, the Solomani corporation GenAssist closed down its operations and attempted to terminate all specimens. Some Ursa escaped and rescued many of their kind, but the slaughter of around 80% of their species has left an indelible mark upon the Ursa. Most just want to be left alone to live in small communities in the countryside.

Ursa enclaves are ruled by family elders, who would be considered quite young by humans. Ursa live relatively brief lives; another tragedy resulting from their unusual origins. Ursa seem rather stern and intimidating to outsiders and they do not give their trust lightly. However, once befriended they are loyal and – perhaps surprisingly – jovial and fun-loving. Perhaps as a reaction to the ease with which they can deal out violence, Ursa are great craftsmen and love to make fine things. They take great joy in jobs that let them create something, which can range from farming through carpentry to naval architecture, but they intensely dislike to destroy anything.

URSA

Characteristics

Ursa Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics: STR +4, END +2



Traits

Ursa Travellers all possess the following traits.

Claws and Teeth: Ursa have powerful claws and jaws, which they can use to fight if they must. Claws deal 1D+3 damage in close combat but can also be used to climb and grip, granting DM+2 on checks to negotiate natural surfaces. Ursa also use their claws and teeth – with surprising dexterity – as tools.

Sore Head: Ursa are prone to be angry at the injustices their species has endured. In their home communities this is offset by the warmth of companionship and their innate sense of fun but when interacting with humans Ursa tend to be surly and ill-tempered at best. This translates to DM-2 applied to all social interactions with humans, except those who have become like family to the Ursa.

VARGR

Technically, the Vargr are another uplifted species but the engineering that turned them from Terran canines into sentient beings took place millennia ago. Vargr are by far the commonest non-human species in the Third Imperium and they are reasonably common in the coreward end of the Trailing Frontier. In Ley, very few worlds have a predominantly Vargr population but many human-populated worlds will have a significant Vargr minority (1–10% of the population, typically). Vargr may live separately in enclaves, or may be fully integrated within local society. Further to rimward, Vargr become less common.

Vargr in Gateway tend to have shorter, flatter snouts than their cousins to coreward. Fur is predominantly sandy or tawny. Pure black Vargr are rare anywhere and in Gateway they are almost unheard-of. The Vargr in Gateway have no overall political structure. They are members of whatever society exists on their home worlds and owe allegiance to their local and planetary rulers with no considerations of species.

ARE WANDERERS A MAJOR RACE?

The commonly accepted facts about the Wandering People are inaccurate or just plain wrong. The Wanderers actually originated in the Trailing Frontier. Like the Luriani they built huge sublight vessels and sent them out to explore and expand across the cosmos. These distant communities survived the destruction of the Wanderers' homeworld by the Vilani Imperium. It is widely believed the Vilani found the Wanderers had developed a jump drive superior to their own and eliminated the Wanderers as a potential threat. If this were true it would make the Wanderers a Major Race but the reality is quite different.

Exactly what happened between the early Vilani explorers and the Wandering People is lost to history but it is now thought the Vilani expeditionary force which met with disaster in the region was launched in response to some incident. It is likely a Vilani official overreacted to an event or perhaps panicked upon finding the Wanderers on multiple worlds. Perhaps this is the origin of the myth that the Wanderers invented the jump drive. Whatever the reason, the Wanderers' civilisation was exterminated in a savage war.

A few survivors escaped, using jump drives taken from disabled Vilani Imperium ships. They eventually found others of their kind and taught them how to build their own drives. It is not known how many enclaves of the Wandering People exist, or if any of the original sublight worldships are still active, but a number of their sublight super-vessels have been encountered in Gateway and Ley.

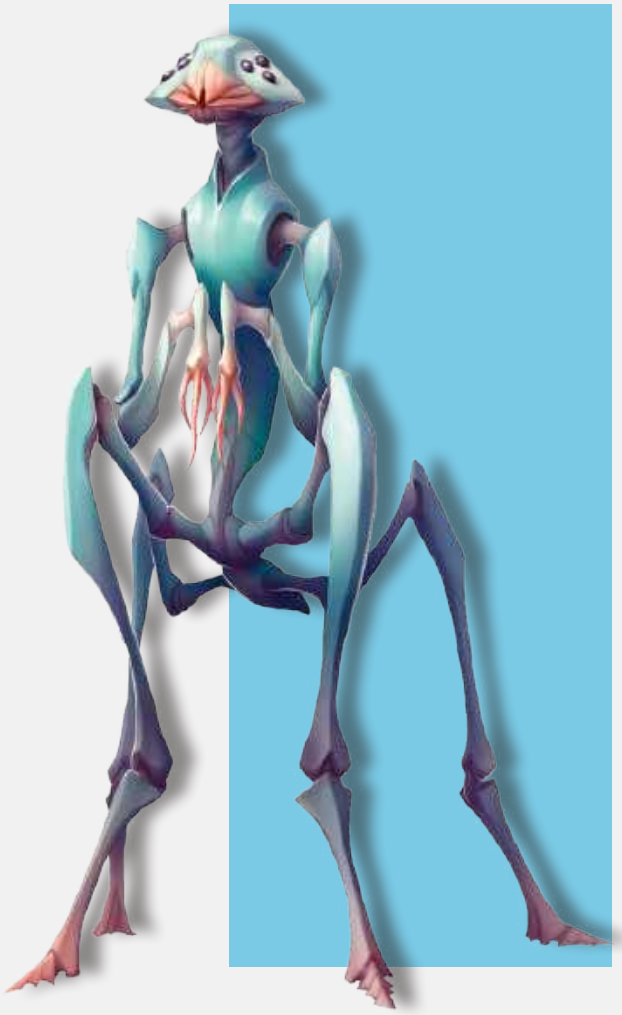
THE WANDERING PEOPLE

The name used by the Wandering People, or Wanderers, for themselves is unpronounceable by humans but is thought to translate as the usual 'thinking people' or 'us'. Humans have applied the label Wanderer and the Wandering People do not seem to care. Their insectoid origins are obvious and the way their bodies are constructed results in a way of moving that constantly surprises and seems wrong to human observers. Their language is also rather difficult to translate. As a result, most Wanderers that interact with humans adopt a common human name like Bob, Alice or Eneri rather than attempting to translate their own.

The Wanderers are a mysterious people, who do not discuss their society or religious beliefs (if they have any) with outsiders. Thus, what is known about them is mainly based upon observation and speculation, and may be inaccurate. It is widely thought the Wandering People entered the Gateway region around year 320 after crossing the Lesser Rift in their worldships. These are gigantic non-jump-capable vessels, each home to a large community of Wanderers. From the worldships, jump-capable vessels range across the region, trading and visiting various worlds. The Wanderers have set up a number of small enclaves on various worlds, from which they conduct trade. Humans are very rarely invited into these enclaves.

Wanderer technology seems to be equivalent to Imperial TL12, although few devices have been examined by experts. The Wanderer way of doing things is very different to the approach used by humans and most other sentients. The exception is their jump drive, which is clearly derived from the original Vilani type. They do not trade their technology with anyone and are rather secretive about it.

Wanderers are peaceable people who will fight in self-defence but more normally respond to threats with negotiation and/or a withdrawal. When they do fight, their warriors are ferocious and not deterred by casualties. It is thought the vast majority of Wanderers have an overwhelming sense of community and cannot bear to be isolated from their kin. However, a small proportion seem to be quite happy to leave the company of their fellows and to travel independently. These individuals are referred to as rogue Wanderers. Their motivations are largely unknown.



WANDERING PEOPLE

Characteristics

Wanderer Travellers have the following modifiers applied to their characteristics:
DEX+2, STR-1, END-1

Traits

Wanderer Travellers all possess the following traits.

Carapace: Wanderers' outer carapace is tough, providing Protection +1.

Weird Movement: The construction of Wanderers' bodies makes the way they move unsettling to many humans. This imposes DM-2 on attempts to read body language or determine intentions by observation and interpersonal skills such as Persuade. Their apparently erratic movements can also throw off attempts to aim, imposing DM-1 to those unused to their physiology when attempting to hit a Wanderer with a ranged weapon.

THE THIRD IMPERIUM

The Third Imperium is subdivided into Domains, each administered by an archduke. Domains are nominally four sectors in size, although in some cases part of this area lies outside the Imperial border. In such cases the archduke only has control over Imperial territory but is responsible for overseeing Imperial activities in the rest of their area of interest. This is the case with the Imperial Domain of Gateway. Only one sector, and not all of that, is actually within the Imperium. The remainder is defined as an area of archducal interest.

Ley sector is mostly Imperial territory and therefore the direct responsibility of the archduke. The trailing-rimward corner of the sector lies outside the Imperial border but close enough that Imperial-based companies are highly active there and security is a major concern for the Imperial authorities. Gateway lies entirely outside the Imperium, with Imperial influence waning quickly away from the border. Similarly, the Glimmerdrift Reaches has only a few Imperial worlds at its coreward end, with a zone of economic and security interest beyond. The extent of this zone depends on political and commercial factors and can vary over time.

Glimmerdrift Reaches also includes a second group of Imperial worlds but these lie on the other side of the Delphi Rift. This makes it impossible to administer these worlds from Ley. They are thus considered part of the Domain of Sylea and administered from Delphi. The remainder of Glimmerdrift Reaches, and all of Crucis Margin, are technically part of the archduke's area of interest but are too far away to receive much attention. Diplomatic missions and the occasional long-range naval expedition represent the limit of official Imperial involvement, although intelligence-gathering and private commercial activity are ongoing.

THE IMPERIAL DOMAIN OF GATEWAY

It is probable that expansion into Gateway and Glimmerdrift Reaches was expected when the Domain was named, and projects aimed at pushing the borders out a few parsecs have at times been mooted. However, the Imperium reached its present borders in the region about 300 years ago and while a few worlds have applied to and joined the Imperium since, there has been little deliberate expansion in the past three centuries.

Thus, while still a frontier, Gateway Domain is also a settled area. There is some friction along the frontier but for the most part the worlds and states close to the Imperial border are used to their status as clients or independent worlds. Relations are not always cordial but understandings have been developed. Cross-border trade and travel is common, and many businesses operate on both sides of the border. Law enforcement agencies usually co-operate, much to the detriment of criminals seeking refuge on the other side of the line.

THE LURIANI CRISIS

The Domain of Gateway is in some ways the least attractive of the Imperial domains, although Sol has a strong claim to this dubious honour. It is fair to say that Gateway is not a proper domain in that most of its nominal territory is outside the Imperial border and thus not subject to the archduke's rule. A part of the Domain's official territory is so difficult to reach due to the Delphi Rift that it is administered elsewhere. However, what there is of Gateway Domain gives the archduke plenty to do.

The internal politics of the domain are complex, not least due to the presence of the Luriani Cultural Association. Once incorporated into the Imperium, the Luriani were good citizens who made little trouble. Despite a mistrust of all things Vilani, they were willing to cooperate with Imperial initiatives and indeed at times actively pushed projects forward despite minimal benefits for themselves. Their loyalty was never in doubt and it may be that some of the former archdukes took the Luriani's support for granted.

The rise to power of Archduke Brandon has its origins in the troubled era just before and after the deposition of Archduke Nells in favour of Marcus Aaron Erechs. Nells, for all his cronyism and corruption, was a Luriani and protected the interests of his people alongside those of his business partners. When he was replaced in 993, the domain gained a non-Luriani archduke. As an outsider, Erechs did not really understand how the Domain's internal politics worked. He simply assumed the Luriani would support him as they had his predecessor, even as he embarked on policies that alienated them.

Moving the domain capital from Daramm to Annapabar was seen as a slap in the face by many Luriani, although they took comfort in the fact that Nells was still duke of Ley Sector and based much closer at Dukh. The chaos of the Great Free-For-All and the enmity of the sector duke and archduke created tensions across the domain, with the Luriani unwilling to support archducal projects. Had Erechs courted the Luriani he might have won them over but his attention was elsewhere and their growing disaffection went unnoticed.

The situation deteriorated further in 1021 upon the death of former Archduke Nells. Archduke Erechs made his own appointment of sector duke from among his loyal supporters. This helped reduce the political infighting in the domain, for a time, but was opposed by the Luriani. Measures to curb their interference saw other nobles replaced. Luriani influence in the sector and Domain was greatly reduced, and their resentment grew.

By 1050, the worlds of the Luriani Cultural Association were suffering a severe recession. Imperial contracts almost always went elsewhere and as the Ley Sector Commercial Alliance grew in stature its members competed ever harder against Luriani companies. Disaffection reached new heights in 1071 when Archduke Stephen, grandson of Archduke Erechs, disbanded the leadership of the Luriani Cultural Association and replaced it with individuals loyal to himself. Not one of them was a Luriani.

The response of the LCA was one of passive disobedience supported by military preparations. The LCA board did not refuse to accept their dismissal; they simply ignored it and carried on with their duties. At the same time, Luriani naval and military forces began undertaking large-scale exercises. These forces were one of the few multiworld militaries within the Imperium and posed a significant threat if the LCA moved into open rebellion. By 1074 it was apparent this was going to happen sooner or later, so Archduke Stephen attempted to have the Imperial Moot revoke the Treaty of Daramm. This would make possession of armed forces by the LCA illegal and was almost certainly a precursor to a campaign of pacification in the region.

Civil war was averted by the intervention of the emperor. Throughout the whole process Count Brandon Minomoru of Daramm had been a tireless advocate of the Luriani but also a voice for fairness and reason. His appeal to the emperor brought about a radical solution but one deemed preferable to war. Archduke Stephen was deposed and replaced by Count Brandon, along with a major realignment of noble positions in Gateway Domain. Many of the families that rose under the Erechs dynasty lost some or all of their titles, whilst others were either won over or given reasons to accept the new situation.

Since his installation in 1076, Archduke Brandon has performed wonders of diplomacy, reintegrating the Luriani into the Domain's economy and social structure with surprisingly little friction. The Luriani remain at odds with the Ley Sector Commercial Alliance in terms of competing for big contracts but their relationship is one of business rivals rather than political opponents – although the two come uncomfortably close at times.

Although he now dwells at the Domain capital at Annapabar, Archduke Brandon retains strong links with his homeworld of Daramm and visits when he can. He is a strong advocate of Luriani culture and values, bringing a different flavour to the archducal court than his predecessors. He is extremely popular at present, not just among the Luriani, for bringing stability to the region and ushering in an era of steady growth in contrast to the boom-and-bust of previous decades.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF THE DOMAIN

As with all Imperial territory, the worlds of Gateway Domain are self-governing. Each planet provides for its own defence as best it can, selects its own style of government, and administers its own laws. Trade agreements and other treaties between worlds are permitted but no multi-world armed forces. Some worlds do possess starfaring warships; these are assigned to the Colonial Fleet that backs the Imperial Navy when not employed on the business of the owning world.

All member worlds are required to recognise Imperial authority in some matters. All worlds are required to recognise and uphold Imperial High Law, which is a relatively small body of law dealing mainly with sentients' rights and freedom of trade within the Imperium. Imperial agents have jurisdiction in matters of High Law, although as a courtesy they usually work with or through their local counterparts.

Each world has one or more Imperial Nobles associated with it. These nobles are not usually planetary rulers and in many cases, they are not even native to their world. Their function is to represent the world's interests at various levels of Imperial administration; in effect serving as liaison between the planetary government and the emperor or his archduke. Depending upon the status of a particular world, its representing noble may be a knight, a baronet, a baron or a marquis.

Several levels of Imperial representation exist. Groups of 3–4 worlds have a count associated with them. This powerful individual maintains a court where representatives of the worlds in the group can interact. Local problems are often dealt with at this level; agreements reached or deals thrashed out by nobles representing local worlds. Nobles from outside the cluster represented by the count will often come to his (or her) court to represent their interests to the group as a whole.

If a matter cannot be adequately settled at the court of the local count, it can be taken to a higher court. Each subsector is the responsibility of a duke, a very powerful individual whose court is responsible for settling matters occurring within the subsector, and is also a place where representatives of worlds outside the subsector come to deal with cross-subsector issues.

Above the subsector dukes is the sector duke, who has his court at the sector capital. The situation in Gateway Domain is unusual since the archduke governs only one sector. This means the sector duke apparently has the same area of responsibility as the archduke. There are, however, some important differences. The sector duke is responsible for the Imperial worlds within Ley, whilst the archduke must consider Imperial interests beyond the border. The usual arrangement is for the duke to handle internal matters and the archduke to provide light oversight whilst dealing with wider concerns. This includes relations with the rest of the Imperium as well as the states and worlds beyond its borders. Much depends upon the personalities involved; some archdukes and sector dukes have made an excellent team; others seem to have elevated treading on one another's toes into an art form.

Notably, political direction of the Imperial armed forces stationed within the sector is the responsibility of the sector duke, whilst the archduke is concerned with operations outside the sector. Neither directly commands the assigned forces, which answer to military officers through the proper chain of command. Instead the nobles provide political direction and make requests which the generals and admirals interpret as they see fit. Both can make a lot of trouble for a senior officer, so requests are generally granted to the best of the force's ability. When the duke and archduke are in accord, matters generally run smoothly. When they are not, the Imperial armed forces have to tread a difficult path through a minefield of conflicting agendas.

Until 993, the ducal and archducal capitals were both located on Dukh. The archducal capital was moved to Annapabar in that year. This controversial move has at times reduced friction and/or increased the time lag inherent in setting up coordinated action. It has been suggested – and dismissed as alarmist propaganda – that the movement of the archducal capital to the very fringe of Imperial territory was an indicator of intent to expand the borders in the near future and also a major security risk. Neither came to pass but one consequence of the move is that matters that cannot be resolved at the ducal level and have to be taken to the archduke's court require longer travel times than before.

Many worlds maintain a representative only at the next highest court – usually that of the count associated with the local cluster of worlds – although some have a representative noble at each level, right up to the Imperial court itself. The normal practice is to present a case to the count, whose representative takes it to the duke if needed. The duke will take it further if necessary. This responsibility to represent lower nobles, even in the case where the count or duke disagrees with them over the matter at hand, is one of the fundamentals of the Imperial system.

Many Imperial nobles are directly involved in representation at various levels. Others have different duties and represent corporations or other organisations. There are also many nobles who hold titles and even have holdings on particular worlds but are not involved in representing them. These individuals have other duties or may simply be hereditary title-holders.

Whilst the Nobility will represent and act for a world, they do not rule it and can do nothing more than advise the world government of the situation and the best course of action. Worlds rule themselves; the Imperial government structure exists to facilitate relations between the worlds and ensure that nobody is shooting at the member worlds as they get on with their business. However, worlds that ignore Imperial High Law are corrected using any and all resources the archduke can bring to bear. The Imperial Navy is the usual means by which correction is applied; measures range from economic sanctions enforced by Naval vessels to planetary assault.

Imperial jurisdiction begins 100 diameters out from a world. Beyond that limit, local forces have no automatic jurisdiction, although there is a blanket permission in place to secure, police and defend the whole star system. Some ethically questionable merchant ship captains think local naval assets cannot stop and search them once they cross the 100-diameter line. This is not the case; local forces in this situation are representing the Imperium rather

than their homeworld and it is not in the interests of the Imperium that they be barred from enforcing local laws. There are some interesting legal questions about who gets custody of a smuggler apprehended 104 diameters out but the boarding and search that apprehends them is entirely legal.

Some goods are illegal on certain worlds but not in the wider Imperium. Carrying such goods through a system whose mainworld has made them illegal is protected under Imperial free-trade laws, although how these are interpreted is one of those questions that often ends up at the archduke's court. Most worlds accept a system whereby cargo that remains aboard a ship, even one landed at a port where the goods are illegal, is ignored unless it poses a direct hazard. However, from time-to-time a local government will try to suppress certain goods and will make it an offence to enter its jurisdiction with them. This is acceptable within Imperial law but only enforceable within the 100-diameter jurisdiction limit. Governments will sometimes try to push this issue and some get away with it, at least for a while.

In the 10–100 diameter region, Imperial forces share jurisdiction for most purposes and within 10 diameters, a world government has complete jurisdiction, with one exception. Starports, defined as the system's main port, are considered Imperial territory. They may be owned and operated by the local government, a corporate body, or any other suitable agency, but the port itself is an area of Imperial jurisdiction. This means that law level may be different from that of the host world. Most ports have a standard law level of 3 but this is not carved in stone.

Starports are often (but not always) guarded by a detachment of Imperial Marines, who also protect diplomatic and bureaucratic staff assigned there. Marines do not normally conduct law enforcement however; portside security or Ministry of Justice personnel are assigned to this task. A world may have multiple spaceports. and there could be others throughout the system, but unless multiple polities exist there will only be one designated starport.

There is no unified Imperial Customs Service. Customs inspections and contraband seizure is a task shared by port operators, the Imperial Navy and local naval forces, plus the Ministry of Justice. The Imperial Navy trains personnel from all services in common techniques but since there are many jurisdictions in Imperial space the Navy only conducts searches in deep space or upon suspicious vessels. Routine customs work is a matter for local forces.

IMPERIAL ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER SERVICES

The Domain administration is backed up by a number of official bodies. The most important, although the last one to be considered by most people, is the Imperial Bureaucracy.

THE IMPERIAL BUREAUCRACY

The Bureaucracy employs thousands of people across the Domain, serving on the staff of various nobles, at starports and in regional offices that deal with the minutiae of government – census figures, taxation, legal matters and so forth. Many of these people are archetypical faceless bureaucrats living comfortable if unexciting lives, collecting a good salary and benefits, and just keeping the administrative apparatus moving along. However, some bureaucrats have much more exciting lives. Some are assigned to frontier or backwater worlds and some belong to offices that see a great many incidents. The Imperial Taxation Audit Service, for example, has such an eventful career that its members are sometimes jokingly referred to as assault accountants.

The Ministry for Trade and Commerce (a sub-office of the Bureaucracy) is also very important in the Trailing Frontier. Its personnel are responsible for resolving trade disputes and ensuring the quality of goods on sale throughout the Imperium. MTC personnel also include some Starport brokers, although most brokers are freelancers. Beyond the Imperial border the MTC maintains official trade missions which may be wholly funded by the Imperial coffers or operated in partnership with private enterprise.

THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE

Alongside the Bureaucracy, the Diplomatic Service tries to keep the peace between worlds and with non-Imperial neighbours. Most personnel are advisors and attaches but some belong to fire brigade squads who are rushed in to defuse crises before they become more serious. These individuals are sometimes exposed to considerable danger and service in the Crisis Management Office is a traditional role for nobles, or a route into the nobility for talented commoners.

THE IMPERIAL COLONIAL OFFICE

The Imperial Colonial Office is responsible for overseeing new colonies, as its name suggests. There have been very few of these in the past few hundred years and ICO is more concerned with investment in developing worlds. Most of the money for these

projects comes from private sources, so ICO must often act as liaison between investors and those receiving the money. The Colonial Office vets investors carefully, and monitors the uses investment money is put to.

THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

The Ministry of Justice has jurisdiction throughout Imperial space where breaches of Imperial High Law are concerned but is not permitted to intervene in local affairs. However, significant grey areas and shared jurisdictions do exist, allowing the MoJ to assist local law enforcement personnel where appropriate. If a criminal has broken only local laws and can get offworld, they are normally safe unless they return to the world where the crime was committed. However, there are two cases where the MoJ may choose to pursue the felon and return them.

The first case is when extradition is requested and the MoJ feels that, although High Law has not been broken, it is in the best interests of the Imperium to return the criminal for trial. This happens when a felon is known to have committed a number of crimes and moved on, several times. Since it is highly likely the criminal will go on offending on each new world, arrest is justified. The second situation occurs when a wanted criminal reaches a starport. Since starports are Imperial territory, they are subject to Imperial rather than local law.

However, since many felons will use this loophole to escape justice, then sit around comfortably waiting for a ship offworld, the MoJ and other Imperial authorities will sometimes make an arrest on behalf of the local government and hand the felon over. Note the MoJ has authority to make an on-behalf arrest only in Imperial territory (at a starport or beyond the 100-diameter limit), in areas of shared jurisdiction (between 10 and 100 diameters) or where co-operation has been granted to or offered by local law enforcement. MoJ personnel can make an arrest in regard to Imperial High Law almost anywhere but when operating on-planet they are bound by local laws except in certain, special, situations.

MoJ personnel provide security for Bureaucracy personnel in some cases and occasionally provide guards to other important installations or starships. Some starports and frontier colonies have MoJ personnel deployed to train local security, or actually providing security and law enforcement. Uniformed personnel are assigned the title of Marshal or Deputy, while detectives and other non-uniformed personnel are ranked as Agents.

THE IMPERIAL INTERSTELLAR SCOUT SERVICE

The IISS has a number of important tasks in the Trailing Frontier, none of which is strictly military. Most importantly, Scout personnel man the x-boats and x-boat tenders that carry information and news along the main communication routes and the fleets of couriers that spread the news wherever it needs to go, off the major routes. Keeping the information flowing is a full-time job for thousands of scouts and even so some worlds only get news every week or two when a free trader comes in from a port that gets a regular courier service. On the main routes, a daily x-boat is the minimal service, with some worlds (especially those that lie on a junction of two or more routes) receiving one as often as every 2–3 hours.

The Scout Service's other two main offices, survey and exploration, are both active in the region. Generally speaking, exploration missions operate outside the Imperial border, charting systems and exploring worlds. Survey missions then follow up with a more detailed survey of the area and also operate inside the borders, cataloguing asteroids and other hazards to navigation, updating planetary and astrographic charts, and monitoring population and other demographic figures. The Scout Service also has large numbers of personnel assigned to its bases and way stations, acting as advisors to colonial projects, and on detached duty – in other words wandering about the region doing whatever they like.

THE NOBILITY

In addition to their service as representatives of various worlds and corporations, the Imperial Nobility has other roles to play. Many nobles serve in the armed forces or the diplomatic or bureaucratic services. Others have no specific duties but are expected to act in the best interests of the Imperium and its citizens at need. Most of these non-assigned nobles are knights or baronets, as higher rank usually brings with it greater responsibility.

Some nobles receive their titles in recognition of service to entertainment or science; such people are rarely suited to take charge of a situation and are not expected to do so. However, hereditary nobles and those ennobled for service in the field are normally resourceful individuals, and are expected to use the authority and influence their title brings to get what needs to be done, done.

There is no legal requirement to obey the orders of a noble during a crisis unless they have specific authority such as over their own household but there is an assumption of trust and leadership inherent with a noble title; if a noble steps forward to lead, the majority of people will instinctively follow. Not all nobles are good people but most know their duty and will act as they think best if the need arises.

THE IMPERIAL NAVY

The usual model for the Imperial Navy is a two-tier system, in which the sector fleet fights wars and the subsector fleets keep the peace. Larger and more potent warfighting assets such as battleships and large carriers – and their necessary supporting and escort elements – are concentrated under the command of the sector fleet, with smaller vessels assigned to the subsector commands for patrol and commerce protection duty. This setup reduces operating costs and protects the fleet assets against defeat in detail if an unexpected conflict arises.

Vessels and indeed whole squadrons can be passed back and forth as needed. In times of war a subsector fleet might be reinforced with capital ships for local defence, or the sector fleet might borrow some escorts for a mission. Vessels sent out over the Imperial border are always under sector fleet command but this is a convention rather than a regulation. In addition, forces belong to a world government, corporation or noble but are subject to mobilisation if necessary to form what is anachronistically known as the Colonial Fleet. Moves to replace this term with something more accurate such as local reserve fleet have always been rejected. Colonial vessels serving outside their home system will usually be under subsector fleet command.

The Ley Sector Fleet follows this general model but its makeup is different from most other sector fleets. It is normal to allocate one fleet unit to a sector per subsector it contains. A fleet unit has a nominal strength of one BatRon (squadron of battleships or battleship-equivalents) and one CruRon (squadron of cruiser sized vessels), plus escorts and support vessels. These are not dispersed in penny packets across the sector, although sometimes a single capital ship might be deployed as a guardship. Instead, the sector fleet concentrates its warfighting assets at a few bases and leaves routine security operations to the subsector fleet.

The subsector fleets of Ley are fairly conventional in makeup. Most vessels are small escorts and patrol ships, with a significant deployment of naval couriers and auxiliaries which handle the Navy's invisible tasks. Subsector flagships are usually cruisers or an equivalently sized carrier, with a few squadrons of destroyers operating either individually or as part of a task force. It is rare for a subsector fleet to have any capital ships.

The sector fleet is identified by the sector's name, whereas the subsector fleets are numbered. It is primarily responsible for dealing with major threats and each sector fleet serves as a reserve for others. Squadrons may be transferred to a trouble spot or deployed out of sector. It is not uncommon for internal sectors facing little threat to contribute a portion of their sector fleet to a reserve force based a sector or so back from a border with a major power. There is no such border in Ley, although there is an open frontier into Gateway and Glimmerdrift Reaches. With no immediate threat requiring battleships, Ley is a low priority area. It is supposed to have a standard force but financial realities over the past century or so have resulted in a different allocation of warships.

The sector fleet has a much smaller complement of capital ships than usual. Some of these are brand-new, built and paid for with money from the Imperium as a whole rather than the Domain. The majority of the new ships are technically on loan from other fleets or on a temporary deployment to Ley before transferring to their intended operator. These vessels, whilst welcome, are a constant reminder that the emperor had to step in to strengthen the sector fleet because the archduke had failed to do so. Other capital ships are very old. These were either built in the sector long ago or bought cheaply when another fleet replaced them. These, too, are something of an embarrassment.

Ley Sector Fleet has more cruisers and carriers than the typical sector fleet. Some of these are relatively cheap designs purchased to get enough hulls out on the spaceways. It was intended they would be replaced but instead they soldier on for lack of anything better. A proportion of the cruiser and carrier strength is modern and of effective designs, including some vessels specifically designed to operate on the far side of the Gateway choke point. Despite pressure to build some proper battleships, the current archduke maintains that cruisers are

the most effective means of securing the region. An Imperial heavy cruiser is a match for the best ships the polities of Gateway can muster.

There are those who constantly ask what the archduke would do if the Lords of Thunder came charging across Gateway sector instead of slowly expanding as they have done up to now. The answer is that the archduke would know about it months in advance thanks to an extensive intelligence gathering network in Gateway and forward-deployed warships. In the time taken for a K'Kree fleet to cross Gateway, reinforcements from the neighbouring sector fleets could mass to meet them. There is no chance of a devastating surprise attack; the real threat is the gradual establishment of K'Kree bases in Gateway. The counter to that, according to the Archduke of Gateway, is diplomacy backed by a force of cruisers.

Although the Ley Sector Fleet has a greater complement of cruiser-class vessels than most similar forces, destroyer-class vessels do most of the sector fleet's daily work. These range from cheap patrol vessels through multirole destroyers and high-end fleet units. They are backed up by a variety of corvette classes which escort the larger ships of the sector fleet and carry out most of the subsector fleet's patrols. Overall, this force is weak in terms of warfighting but adequate for its security role and to project a little power out into Gateway and Glimmerdrift Reaches.

THE IMPERIAL ARMY AND MARINES

The Imperial Army and Marine Corps are separate commands. The Marines have their own starships, most of which are support, transport and logistics vessels plus a few escorts. Marines conduct space-related operations including installation security and boardings as well as spearheading assaults on hard targets. The army is focused on longer-term campaigns and large-scale battles against an organised enemy. Thus whilst elements of the Marine Corps might be the first into a warzone it is the army who slog it out and deal with any insurgency that may emerge afterwards.

The army's main warfighting units are concentrated at their bases or permanently deployed to protect major installations, with smaller formations scattered around potential trouble spots or acting as a rapid-response force. A significant proportion of units deployed in Ley are relatively lightly equipped and trained for Operations In Support of Peace. This means security and counter-insurgency work combined with providing local assistance in the aftermath of a conflict or disaster. These units are often encountered on long-term deployments or assisting a local government in projects intended to stabilise an area. The engineering component of such a force might be called upon to build roads and bridges whilst combat units sweep the surrounding countryside for insurgents.

THE IMPERIAL FORCES IN GATEWAY

The Imperium has no member worlds in Gateway sector but maintains a forward deployment of army, marine and naval assets at friendly worlds. Anti-piracy sweeps into neutral space are a common task for the navy, whilst ground combat formations mostly provide training, support and security as requested. Operating outside the frontier is always tricky and the Imperial authorities generally tread lightly. Whilst a given problem could be solved quickly with force this would set back relations with others. Diplomacy, economic pressure and displays of military capability are far more common than direct intervention and when that is required every effort is made to obtain local approval or a suitable justification.

Although funds are short and enthusiasm is not great, the hardening of Gateway has been an Imperial goal since the K'Kree were first encountered. Ideally, the Imperium wants control over the astrographic choke point created by the end of the Lesser Rift, with all worlds in the zone incorporated into the Imperium and heavily fortified. Beyond this will be a zone of friendly states which can resist a K'Kree advance with Imperial support but – hopefully – without committing the Imperium to direct war against the K'Kree. This plan is practicable with sufficient effort but the internal troubles of Gateway have always prevented much progress being made.

The Imperium has no firm allies in Gateway but maintains generally good relations with the Galian Federation. Imperial ships are more likely to be encountered in its territory than elsewhere and are granted visiting friendly warship status at Galian naval installations and most starports. A significant force of small carriers, light cruisers and destroyers is routinely deployed out of the Galian naval base at Tharver or an ersatz forward operating base at Gateway, enabling Imperial vessels to show the flag right across Gateway sector – at least from time-to-time. This arrangement is controversial and not liked by the Galian Federation's rivals but the Imperial position is that the Galians are the rightful successors to the old Galian Trade League and the breakaway states of Trindel and Viyard are somehow less legitimate. Imperial interests would be furthered by a reconstitution of the Trade League but no overt action to this end has been taken by Imperial forces.

THE LORDS OF THUNDER

The Lords of Thunder, or Xuruk'xaar'keer! in their native language, are a particularly militant – even by K'Kree standards – polity built around exiles from the Two Thousand Worlds. Ostensibly, their determination to destroy all G'naak (meat-eaters, or vermin) is so extreme that even the Steppelords of the Two Thousand Worlds could not tolerate them. It is more likely their exile was due to internal politics rather than a moral objection to the stomping of vermin. The extreme mindset of the Lords of Thunder appeals to many K'Kree and it is entirely likely the Steppelords feared losing support of their most militant followers.

Whatever the reason for their exile, the Lords of Thunder have been advancing spinwards for two centuries and have now established a frontier on the border of Gateway. It is only a matter of time before a new advance begins. For those in the way, there are at most two options: death, or subjugation. Conquered or surrendered populations are not always spared; even those willing to convert to a vegetarian lifestyle and accept K'Kree overlordship might be exterminated if the Lords of Thunder consider them a future threat – or sometimes just to demonstrate a particular leader's fanaticism.

The Lords of Thunder officially still owe allegiance to the Grand Steppelord of the Two Thousand Worlds. They will usually make a show of deference towards ambassadors but in reality think they are the real K'Kree society and everyone else has gone soft. Perhaps the Lords of Thunder are as much a threat to the Two Thousand Worlds as they are to the G'naak states to spinward of their territory. The position of the Two Thousand Worlds towards the Lords of Thunder is something of a mystery. Perhaps they hope the exiles will weaken themselves slaughtering G'naak and cease to be a problem.

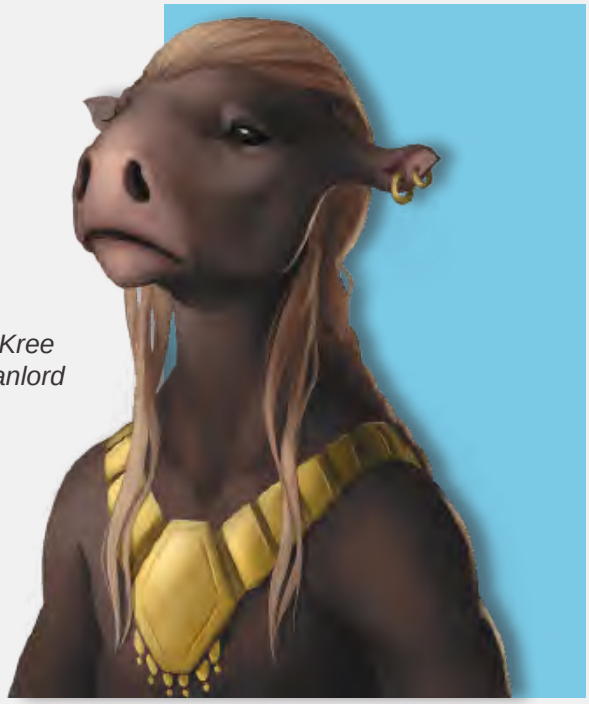
Most outsiders know little for certain about the Lords of Thunder and there is considerable doubt as to whether any given emissary is actually from the Two Thousand Worlds or the Lords of Thunder. Representatives routinely claim to speak for the main K'Kree society and are quite happy to create an inflated impression of their power in this manner. The waters are further muddied by the fact the Lords of Thunder are not unified. They are an association or alliance of powerful leaders all trying to out-fanatic one another, with no overall leadership except on occasions where someone has rallied sufficient support to lead the Lords of Thunder as a whole for a short while. This disunity might be the salvation of meat-eaters but ultimately all K'Kree of the Lords of Thunder have the same mission and are passionate about it.

Unlike their human neighbours, the K'Kree are unwilling to colonise rockball and iceball worlds, and so maintain little more than outposts on any world without breathable air and plenty of open space – unless of course they have a good reason for being there. They will set up new herds on conquered garden worlds, often driving the local population into marginal terrain or simply killing them. The pattern for a K'Kree-ised world of this sort is one of small cities interspersed with wide plains, with herds of K'Kree roaming freely wherever they please. These herds will contribute contingents to offworld endeavours and welcome home those who have been serving elsewhere when their time is done.

The establishment of such paradises is part of the mission taken on by the Lords of Thunder and both facilitates and inspires further advances. Knowing the wide plains of home await at the end of their mission and that their mission might result in the capture of more wide plains to wander, drives many young K'Kree onwards. Although worlds without open lands are incorporated within the territory of the Lords of Thunder, they are not always occupied. If the population is small they may be relocated if it is deemed worth the effort or kept isolated and largely ignored. In such cases a small contingent is usually maintained to control the starport and monitor the population for dissent. This is an unpleasant duty, often used as a punishment or given to those who have not pleased their clanlords.

Economically valuable worlds lacking a K'Kree-friendly environment require a garrison. Where possible this is made up of personnel from subject species, many of them humans, overseen by a small K'Kree contingent. These security forces are lightly equipped and could not withstand a serious attack but are mostly sufficient to keep the population in line. Any attempt at an uprising is met with savage reprisals; the Lords of Thunder seem to take it rather personally when a world population forces them to fight on terrain they do not like.

The result of these policies is that the territory of the Lords of Thunder consists of K'Kree-friendly garden worlds and industrial hubs with low-population worlds in between. Many have just enough people to create an economy capable of supporting the starport and are of little economic or strategic value. Internal security is less of a problem than for most conquerors due to the willingness of the Lords of Thunder to savagely punish or simply exterminate the population if they prove difficult to control. In most cases the response to unrest is to close off the starport and effectively place the planetary population under siege. If they surrender and accept punishment before the Lords of Thunder get around to forcibly pacifying them they should consider they got off lightly.



K-Kree clanlord

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

The political structure of the Lords of Thunder is similar in most ways to that of the Two Thousand Worlds, with certain exceptions. Social structures are built around extended families led by a patriarch who owes allegiance to his clanlord and above him a steppelord. Within a clan some families have specialist functions such as warriors, merchants or ambassadors but no family is composed of only one profession. For example, a merchant patriarch might have multiple clerks and administrators in his family but there will also be the odd warrior. A warrior family might be the other way around, with most of the males specialising as warriors but sufficient merchants and administrators to ensure the extended family can function as a self-contained unit. This is inefficient in many ways but does mean a K'Kree extended family is a resourceful and resilient social entity.

The social hierarchy of the Lords of Thunder is typical of K'Kree everywhere. A dominant male leads a small family consisting of around 6–24 individuals. About half of these will be the wives of the patriarch and his immediate followers, who are likely to be his relatives or offspring. Six to twelve small families form a big family lead by the most senior patriarch. These are grouped into field families, commonly referred to as herds. A typical herdlord leads 300–800 K'Kree, including big families specialising in various different roles.

Two or more herds – usually 3–6 – form a pasture family, or clan, which is ruled by a clanlord. Clanlords are the lowest rank permitted to have diplomatic or mercantile dealings with outsiders, although they rarely interact directly. More commonly an extended family specialising in commerce or diplomacy will be sent to handle affairs. This does mean that receiving an ambassador from the Lords of Thunder means a visit from over 100 large creatures, all of whom need considerable space and who cannot cope with being separated from the group. A diplomatic reception is not a small affair.

Groupings of clans, usually numbering 10,000 or more K'Kree, are known as plain-families and are led by a senior noble known as the lieutenant-of-the-steppelord. Two or more plain-families form a steppe-family led by a steppelord. Typically, a steppe-family will consist of two or three plain-families living a traditional lifestyle as nomads and a smaller plain-family which has the task of operating a city. These are sometimes known as city-families and are of lower status in the steppe-family than those who can wander freely. Their main task is to ensure the nomadic groups are kept supplied with vehicles, clothing and technological items so they can enjoy their traditional lifestyle with the added comfort of advanced technology. Outsiders often make the mistake of assuming the city associated with a steppe-family is its capital. This is not the case at all. The steppelord commands from wherever the steppelord happens to be, which is usually on the move out under the open sky. He will visit his city as rarely as possible.

Above the steppelords of a given world is the lord-of-steppelords, effectively the planetary ruler. In the Two Thousand Worlds the lords-of-steppelords answer to the grand steppelord, and officially this is also the situation in the territory of the Lords of Thunder. However, unofficially their leaders have begun styling themselves the overlords-of-the-innumerable-thundering-hordes, or more simply as the Lords of Thunder. Although they pay lip service to the authority

of the grand steppelord, the Lords of Thunder consider themselves to be autonomous. Each commands a following of several lords-of-steppelords and wields their resources as seems best.

The Lords of Thunder do not seem to have ever agreed on an overall political structure. Some act as if they are sole leader of the exiles whilst others recognise an unspoken hierarchy within which a handful of the greatest overlords stand above the rest. Some outsiders think there is a ruling council among the Lords of Thunder but in fact the situation is much looser. The power, prestige and influence of any given leader dictates to what extent they can push the rest of their society in any given direction. Some simply act, knowing their fellows will not leave them to face a G'naak backlash alone. Thus, the one thing that is known for certain about the Lords of Thunder is that they are a threat to everyone around them.

FOREIGN POLICY AND MILITARY ORGANISATION

The Lords of Thunder know very well that the Imperium is a powerful state which would almost certainly react to a campaign of extermination by the K'Kree against humans or other creatures in Gateway. It might or might not intervene in an attempt to seize territory in the non-aligned area. A prudent leadership would keep its operations fairly low-key, working mainly by intimidation and the slow creep of borders that also characterises Imperial expansion. The Lords of Thunder sometimes operate this way but at any given time there will be one or more leaders who want to lead a thundering charge rather than creeping up on the enemy. This can lead to setbacks and eclipse but it is only a matter of time before someone else takes the lead.

Foreign policy is thus rather muddled and subject to cross-cutting agendas. The careful plans of several of the Lords can be overturned when some hothead goes trampling straight through their area of operations. Only when the most powerful leaders are in accord on something and are prepared to squash anyone who interferes in their plans can a coherent foreign policy be said to exist. At most times, the situation is a mess of diplomatic and economic gambits counterpointed by raids or military posturing and extravagant demands.

K'Kree ground forces are very different from those of most other species, both in terms of how they fight and their organisational structure. Forces are organised on a semi-feudal basis as bands of warriors, which are very loyal to their leader and may be demoralised if he is killed. Larger forces are simply warbands-of-warbands. Leaders of these larger warbands are usually charismatic and influential nobles who may or may not have a good grasp of strategy.

K'Kree warriors are essentially cavalry and prefer to fight in the open with personal weapons. Their warbands are augmented with robotic weapon platforms which manoeuvre alongside the hoof-soldiers and provide support as necessary. Use of cover and fortifications are minimal; K'Kree generally do not care much for terrain objectives either. Their aim is the destruction of enemy forces, ideally by means of a sweeping charge and pursuit of a defeated foe.

Whilst amateurish by the standards of most human polities, this method of fighting plays to the strengths of the K'Kree. Prowess and bravery are rewarded with status and no K'Kree could stand to let the herd down. Their forces are thus excessively valorous and will often keep trying to win a battle long after a sensible commander would have fled. This can bring about immensely costly victories but the Lords of Thunder are not stupid. Their better commanders excel at skirmishing and retreating, ideally drawing the enemy out of their positions into a disorganised advance. On many occasions a K'Kree retreat has suddenly become an all-out charge from the front and the flanks, and some of their opponents have implemented an extreme caution on the advance policy which in turn imposes strategic limitations.

Since K'Kree cannot stand being confined, their armoured vehicles are huge and crewed by multiple warriors. They generally resemble large fighting platforms or mobile forts rather than tanks or strike vehicles. Mounting multiple powerful weapons, these platforms can provide mobile fire support to the troops on the ground. They are large targets but well protected. Similarly, military starships are large and rather inefficient. They are organised similarly to ground forces, along semi-feudal lines. Individual crews are generally skilled but complex fleet manoeuvres are rarely very successful.

This problem is offset by two factors. One is the ships themselves, which tend to be tough and individually capable. The other is the use of robotic fighters. This echoes the use of robotic fire support platforms in ground combat. Fighters are directed rather than controlled, with operators selecting tactics, formations and targets, allowing the fighters to operate autonomously. Losses are entirely irrelevant to most K'Kree commanders, which is just as well since the fighters are invariably handled with more aggression than finesse. The fighter swarm is backed up by missile salvoes, with orphaned craft and munitions transferring to the herd of another command ship when necessary.

LOCAL POWERS

None of the other powers in the region is particularly large or powerful. Most are primarily human states which have grown up in Gateway from Rule of Man-era colonies. The only non-Imperial multiworld power in Ley is the Khuur League.

THE KHUUR LEAGUE

The Khuur League is a trade federation dominated by the Sydite people. It is a remnant of the Sydymic Empire, which was smashed long ago by the Imperium and is not a major player on the cosmic stage. Its main political asset is an accident of astrography. Lying in the middle of the astrographic choke point between Ley and Gateway, the worlds of the League provide a jump-2 link to those permitted passage. This has led to constant arguments with Imperial officials over tariffs and transit rights, which occasionally lead to concessions and sanctions. The Khuur Transit can be closed off at short notice, making it something of a risk. The benefits of not having to transit around to rimward of the League are generally considered worth it.

The League has always traded freely among the independent worlds beyond the Imperial frontier and with worlds once part of the Empire now absorbed by the Imperium. In recent years, the League's members have begun to look farther afield for new markets and have begun to invest in Imperial worlds along the border. Trader ships now ply the Imperial commerce routes quite frequently and many Sydite businesses have opened offices on Imperial planets. While it would be foolish to discount the possibility of some kind of economic masterplan, especially on the part of a conquered people, it is known the Sydites are not particularly subtle or inventive. It is far more likely the recent moves are motivated by economic factors within the League.

LEAGUE MILITARY

The treaty imposed by the Imperium at the surrender of the Sydymic Empire prohibits the League from possessing military forces, although individual member worlds are permitted a defensive force and a few escort ships for commercial protection. Member worlds mostly rely on orbital fortifications and flotillas of system defence boats for protection, backed by ground-based weapon systems. Ground forces vary in size and capability.

Other than a handful of small patrol ships, the only starfaring assets possessed by the League are the fleet of armed merchant cruisers operated by various members. Incapable of standing up to a real warship, these AMCs would make pretty fair commerce raiders or a reasonable deterrent to one. The League does build small warships for export, mainly large and rugged escort vessels that find a ready market in the Gateway and Crucis Margin sectors. These vessels are built the way the Empire used to build its warships – heavy and solid, with the emphasis on close and middle-range weapons. Such vessels are well suited to unimaginative Sydite battle tactics; they are designed to close with the enemy and stubbornly slug it out.

Traditionally, most major Sydite ships were built with a second, jump-1 capable, drive buried deep in the hull. This allowed them to take horrific punishment and still escape for repairs. It is likely that most if not all of the Sydite merchant cruisers follow a similar practice. Hardening procedures of this sort are used in most fields; where an Imperial settlement might have a single large reactor for efficiency a Sydite equivalent will have two or more. These will be separated as much as possible to increase survivability in the event of a disaster.

THE GALIAN FEDERATION

Comprising 32 star systems lying at the spinward end of Gateway sector, the Galian Federation is a remnant of the old Galian Trade League. It remains one of the most important polities in Gateway. Close to the only jump-2 link into Ley sector, the Federation has considerable contact with the Imperium. Relations are reasonably friendly, although with the Khuur League lying on the direct route into the Imperium, traffic sometimes has to go a long way around through non-aligned space.

The majority of the population are humans, with a sizable Sydite minority. As a long-term stable state, the Federation has received considerable numbers of refugees from wars elsewhere in the sector. Some are desperate evacuees but for the most part it is the wealthy who can relocate, taking with them their staff and hangers-on. One result of this is a steady influx of well-off people seeking to set up a new business. In

times of uncertainty elsewhere the Galian Federation is an attractive bolt-hole and many businesses maintain at least some holdings there just in case.

Several worlds of the Galian Federation are host to Imperial Trade Missions. These are not always sanctioned by the authorities across the border and it can be hard to tell the difference between a private venture which has tacit approval to act as a diplomatic conduit and a rogue merchant seeking to legitimise their trans-border dealings. On the whole, the trade missions contribute to good relations and improve stability in the region. They also make it much easier for Imperial vessels to obtain permission to move through Galian territory, including warships operating farther out in Gateway.

Relations are generally polite to good with the Khuur League, subject to the occasional closing-down of trade routes to impede Imperial operations. Conflict in the past has been replaced by increasingly strong trade links which have in turn benefited the worlds in between. Tradeships undertake long voyages outside Galian space, bearing not only goods but influence and the Federation remains a potent force in the politics of Gateway. There are many who believe the breakaway states could and perhaps should be re-integrated, by force if necessary. This is more a response to the threat posed by the Hochiken People's Assembly than a counter to possible K'Kree aggression but many Imperial diplomats seem to be in favour of the move.

The Federation maintains links to the trailing states of the sector, primarily the Megusard Corporate and Renkard Union via the Gateway-Sardis Run, a trade route through non-aligned space where pirate attacks are common. Whilst in theory it would be possible to route trade through the Trindel Confederacy, the Federation prefers not to pay passage fees, nor to rely on passage through even a friendly state. The risks inherent in the Gateway-Sardis route are outweighed in the mind of the Federation by the advantages of keeping foreign influences out of Federation trade.

The Federation's industrial and technological base is at Tharver, Salur, Hanumisk, Cresta and Wolden, while some worlds remain under-developed. Refugees are currently being offered quite generous grants of land and property to settle on frontier worlds like Thermal or Basilisk, in the hope of creating a decent economic base on these planets. Considerable investment has been generated by a convoluted process, whereby those wishing to relocate into Federation space are permitted to open businesses on the main worlds in return for putting up money for development of the frontier worlds. It is often said, although inaccurately, that providing employment for 100 people on Basilisk buys an office for four on Tharver.

GALIAN MILITARY

The Galian Federation is also the most powerful state in military terms in the Gateway sector. Its forces are mainly deployed to counter the threat from the HPA and the Viyard Concourse. These forces are built on TL9 hulls and backup components, with TL10 systems shipped into the yards for weapons, drives and electronics. This system is somewhat vulnerable to disruption but allows capable warships to be constructed by worlds possessing only TL9. This is most of the Federation. Designs are standardised throughout the Federation.

For the most part, the Federation operates a balanced navy, with a good mix of cruiser-sized major units and light anti-piracy vessels. Tharver and Salur host the main naval bases and it is here the battle squadrons are based. Lighter forces patrol the rest of the Federation, while long-range vessels (with tanker support) conduct anti-piracy sweeps far beyond Federation borders, mainly along the troubled Gateway-Sardis Run. Imperial vessels are also sometimes based in Federation space, with joint naval exercises becoming increasingly common.

THE TRINDEL CONFEDERACY

Once a part of the Galian League, the Confederacy comprises three small states across 12 star systems roughly in the centre of Gateway sector. These worlds form a very loose organisation with no central capital – the three states that make up the Confederacy have their capitals at Taravesh, Trindel and Ashton. Confederacy politics are something of a nightmare, with the internal affairs of three states spilling over into the internal and external politics of the Confederacy as a whole. As a result, an excess of compromises hamstrings most attempts to get anything done, while occasionally the need to push a measure through results in agreements to all sorts of projects, concessions and operations.

The Trindel Confederacy lies very close to the Galian Federation and is strongly influenced by the Federation even although it is officially independent and neutral in the Federation's ongoing dispute with the Viyard Concourse. The industrial worlds of Trindel and Taravesh provide most of the Confederacy's technology and Trindel's central position makes it the natural choice for what passes for a capital. It is a base of operations, if not always the headquarters, of many of the Confederacy's

corporate concerns. The Imperial megacorporation Sternmetal Horizons LIC has offices on Trindel and is involved in a number of investments within Confederacy space. Sternmetal is the only Imperial concern to make much of an impact in the region.

CONFEDERACY MILITARY

The Trindel Confederacy has no real military of its own. Its navy consists of ships loaned to a central command structure by the three states of the Confederation, which in turn receive them under loan from individual worlds. Therefore, a Confederacy vessel might be serving under its world flag, state flag or the Confederacy flag and be subject to different priorities. There are few standard ship designs and most vessels are in the light cruiser size range or smaller.

THE PLAVIAN LEAGUE

Another fragment of the defunct Galian Trade League, the Plavian League comprises 21 systems on the fringe of the Lesser Rift. The Heptad, a cluster of seven worlds centred on Tash, represents the dominant economic power. The League also consists of an alliance of smaller states but is generally more cohesive than the Trindel Confederacy. The League capital is situated at Plavis, with regional capitals at Tash and Bremen. Industrial and technological capability is high across the League and as a result political weight is fairly equally distributed. Due to the threat of full-scale war with the Hochiken People's Assembly (HPA), the various league factions are highly co-operative with one another.

The League is openly hostile to the HPA. Skirmishing has taken place for over a century, with long lulls of near-peace between incidents. In recent years, however, tensions have increased and live-fire incidents are becoming common once again. Requests for aid from the Galian Federation have been countered with unacceptable conditions, raising the price of Federation assistance too high for the League to pay. Recent declarations by the HPA that it intends to capture the Heptad are thought to be posturing but funds are being diverted to a modest increase in defensive capabilities.

LEAGUE MILITARY

The League maintains a centralised Navy and Support Force, divided into three regional commands and a reserve which are unequal in size. Forces are heavily committed among the Heptad worlds and at Prevarren, where the HPA threat is greatest. Any advance into the League's territory would have to arrive by way of Prevarren or the jump-2 transit into the Heptad by way of Concord.

The League's mostly TL10 navy is primarily a defensive force of heavily armed and armoured but not very manoeuvrable, cruisers and heavy units. A few fast expeditionary units are maintained in the hope that the threat of retaliation will deter an aggressor. A naval base is under construction at Bremen and a large force of light anti-piracy vessels is being worked up to use it.

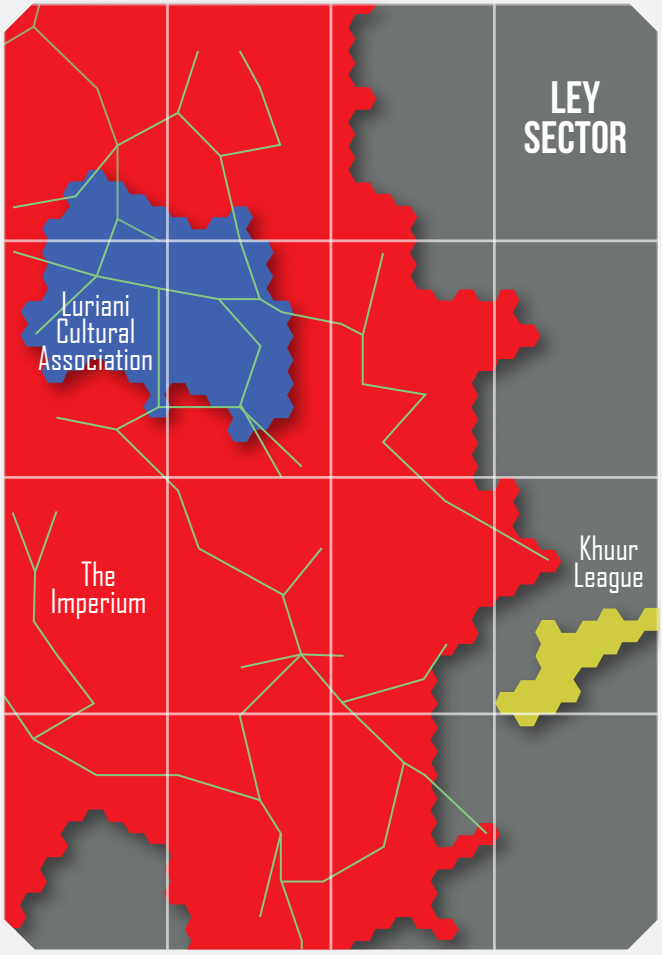
Many worlds, mainly those of the Heptad, also have heavy orbital and ground-based defences including aerospace interceptors, heavy missile emplacements and orbital forts. These are not intended to defeat an attacker, merely to free the battle units to manoeuvre without being too closely tied to planetary defence. Thus far, the system has worked. Few HPA raids have succeeded in even closing with a major target, although commerce raids are a problem.

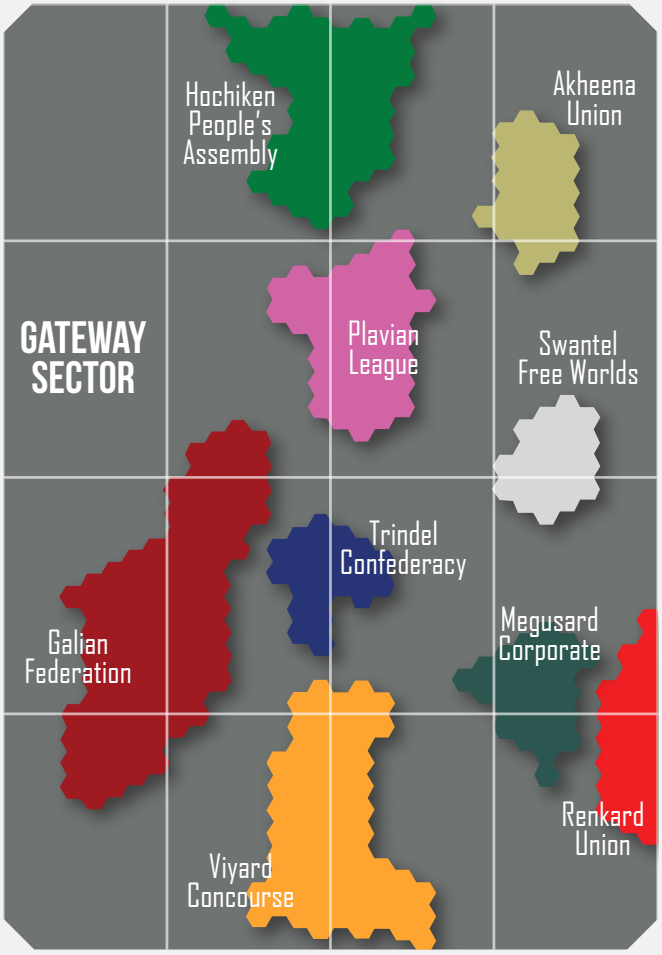
THE HOCHIKEN PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY (HPA)

Originally a democratic state, the HPA is now a military dictatorship whose internal politics are characterised by political and military manoeuvring. The state lies on the fringe of the Lesser Rift. To coreward is a client state of the Two Thousand Worlds which is not thought to have ties to the Lords of Thunder. The HPA's renewed aggression towards the Plavian League suggests it does not feel threatened by this state, although the exact nature of relations is unknown.

Governance of the HPA is handicapped by the fact many worlds of the HPA are separated from the rest by a three-parsec rift. Even without this problem the central government, situated at Granth, is relatively weak and has trouble controlling the powerful admirals of the HPA fleet. A number of factions are jockeying for position and while the central government is able to contain them individually, an alliance could probably topple the present government in a civil war or, more likely, a coup.

Several rising stars amongst the HPA military leadership are strengthening their powerbase by gaining prestige in unofficial military actions. These include commerce raids into Plavian space and anti-piracy sweeps that may or may not be aimed at crushing pirate bands. At least one former pirate haven is under the control of an HPA taskforce, a move that





would win favour with the interstellar community were the place not being turned into the private fief and fortress of the HPA commodore responsible.

Incidents along the border with the Plavian League are increasing in frequency and it is only a matter of time before they spill over into full-scale war. However, since the HPA is one of the most powerful states in the region, the League is doubtful about its ability to survive such a conflict and thus seeks to stave off the confrontation as long as possible.

HPA MILITARY

The HPA maintains a powerful TL10 navy, which includes vessels of up to battleship size and a strategic reserve composed mainly of TL9 monitors and gunships. The strategic reserve provides system defence and can also undertake mobile operations when transported by large jump-capable carrier/tenders. The military of the HPA is well-trained and efficient up to the squadron level but rivalries and political mistrust tend to hamper operations at higher levels, unless a particularly charismatic admiral is in charge.

The HPA vessels commonly seen outside Assembly space are large missile destroyers and combat tenders. The latter also mount heavy missile armament and can deploy squadrons of 600-ton strike corvettes. Tenders also carry a contingent of ground troops and their associated shuttles. These general-purpose vessels conduct patrols and border duties, and can call on support from fleet units using their jump-capable courier boats.

THE VIYARD CONCOURSE

The Concourse was formed from fragments of the collapsed Galian Trade League and another failed polity named the Collective. The capital is at Viyard but the old Collective capital at Barclaron is also extremely important. The average Tech Level of Concourse worlds is 9-10, although industrial capacity is rather low. Astrographically the Concourse is rather scattered, with worlds grouped in twos and threes separated by two-parsec gaps. This has prevented the development of local-hub economies.

For several decades, the Concourse and the Trindel Confederacy were loosely aligned against the Galian Federation. This was mainly a matter of economic

conflict and collective diplomacy, and was never a formal military alliance. Relations soured towards the end of the last century, culminating in a war which saw Coralee conquered by the Confederacy. Although peace has officially been declared resistance continues on Coralee, with intermittent and patchy support from the Concourse.

The Concourse is also engaged in a dispute with the Galian Federation over the ownership of worlds lying between the two, a dispute that has led to many free-fore incidents and occasional war-like situations. Tensions are not likely to relax in the near future and trade between the two is almost non-existent. Long-standing enmity with the Galian Federation has led the Concourse to seek allies elsewhere but a treaty with the HPA proved short-lived and of little value. There does remain a possibility that Concourse policies may be coordinated with those of the HPA in order to distract and separate the attentions of the Galian Federation and their Plavian allies.

CONCOURSE MILITARY

Industrial capacity in the Concourse is relatively low, which precludes the building of large, sophisticated ships except in certain yards. As a result, the Concourse builds its navy around the concept of task groups centred on a large flag cruiser supported by a flotilla of simpler, smaller vessels.

The majority of Concourse vessels are frigates in the 2–4,000-ton range and of various types: escort, missile, strike and patrol classes being most common. Each task group also contains an intelligence ship designed to control and direct the remainder, and a handful of larger fleet frigates which are equivalent to small destroyers. Concourse task groups are efficient and effective so long as control is maintained. Once cohesion is lost, individual vessels tend to perform poorly due to a lack of initiative among commanders used to receiving detailed instructions.

THE AKEENA UNION

Comprising 11 worlds in the trailing end of Gateway, the Akeena Union is dominated by the Akeed, a non-human minor race originating on Akeen. Most Union worlds have a large human minority population, which conducts the majority of diplomacy and commerce with outsiders – with one exception. The vast majority of direct meetings between Akeena personnel and K'Kree are conducted solely by Akeed.

The Union is officially and determinedly neutral in the affairs of human polities. The great majority of the human population is similarly disinterested, although some firms have strong leanings. Relations with the K'Kree are fairly good, since the Akeed do not eat meat in any form and are careful to keep humans who might away from visitors. Trade with the Two Thousand Worlds is considerable, going by way of Crucis Margin sector or even through the territory of the Lords of Thunder. This creates an avenue for human-K'Kree trade and diplomacy that might otherwise not exist. It would also be a useful way of gathering intelligence if the Akeed were willing to do so but they politely ignore suggestions from other powers. The Union is thought to have some kind of defence agreement with the two Thousand Worlds. While not amounting to a full mutual defence pact, the Union can expect aid of some kind from the main K'Kree polity in the event of harassment by the Lords of Thunder and from the Lords of Thunder if hostilities commence with other states of the region.

Akeed itself possesses a solid TL12 industrial base, making it fairly advanced for the region. Technological items are disseminated throughout the Union but the technological base away from Akeed is rather lower. The various subject worlds have not built up a major industrial or technological base and do not seem to be keen to do so. Akeed technology is generally incompatible with systems used by other powers, although much of it is built to be used by humans.

UNION MILITARY

The Akeena Union maintains a small fleet of fairly advanced jump-2 vessels. Since the Akeed are interested only in defending what they have, vessels are intended to operate on interior lines of communication. No system is more than 2 jumps from the fleet base at Akeen. Small tripwire squadrons are stationed in all systems, with the main fleet elements based at Akeen.

Actual capabilities and armament of Union vessels are a closely guarded secret. Reports indicate a preponderance of light-cruiser sized vessels armed with oversized particle accelerator weapons, supported by swarms of close escorts that may or may not also have a strike role.

SWANFEI INDEPENDENCY

The Swanfei Independency lies at the trailingward end of Gateway. Its worlds were originally settled by a minor human race known as the Swanfeh about 2,000 years ago, during the Long Night. It is generally

believed they did not come from Terra but migrated from other systems to eventually settle Carlton. The Swanfeh thrived here and achieved a starfaring culture of some power, spreading out to control 30 or so worlds before gradually losing their technology over a period of centuries.

The Swanfeh were isolated on several worlds when the region opened up again and either allied with or were conquered by various opportunist groups that arrived over the last millennia. The pirate bands operating in the region found the Swanfeh worlds to be ideal havens and gradually came to dominate what became known as the Pirate Worlds. For centuries, Carlton and the surrounding worlds were little but freeports for pirates and smugglers but over time the profits of piracy were used to create legitimate business. Now the Swanfei Free Worlds are a recognised interstellar polity, albeit a rather dubious, rough-and-ready one.

The Independency, to use the official name, is a major centre for business, particularly arms trading and mercenary operations. According to rumour, almost anything can be bought and sold in the Independency, and pirates can still find a safe haven there. However, the veneer of legitimacy and the fact that pirates do not blatantly operate out of the Free Worlds has allowed the interstellar community to accept it and prevented much in the way of retaliation.

INDEPENDENCY MILITARY

The armed forces of the Independency are clearly descended from pirate bands, although these days they have the trappings of legitimate military forces. Vessels are typically small, heavily armed and fast, with contingents of troops aboard for boarding actions. Command structure is rather loose within the Independency and rather more dependent upon influence and power than actual rank. Therefore, the Free Worlds Navy has many Admirals who command only a ship or two, and bickering among subordinates is a common factor.

Ships and even whole squadrons are often detached for mercenary duty in the service of independent worlds, corporations or large states, allowing the crews to gain considerable combat experience and perhaps covering the odd sly raid. The navy undertakes anti-piracy sweeps – some say merely to remove the competition – but rumours persist that Free Worlds Navy vessels have been involved in raids and outright piracy on several occasions.

At present, several squadrons are in service with the Renkard Union. It is widely hoped their presence might help deter the threat of aggression from the Lords of Thunder. However, given the opportunistic and undisciplined nature of Free Worlds ship commanders, incidents are inevitable. Already there have been clashes which were blamed on the Free Worlds. Its leaders insist they are being used as scapegoats by those who want escalation or deniable strikes against the K'Kree.

THE MEGUSARD CORPORATE

Comprising 11 worlds at the trailing end of Gateway, the Corporate was once a large corporation – Megusard Interstellar – based out of Sardis. Megusard Interstellar made the transition to a full interstellar government over many years, mainly as a response to the rise of piracy in the region and the breakup of the Galian Trade League. Although the Corporate has ceased to be a monolithic commercial institution, many trappings of corporate operation remain. Individual worlds hold a status rather like owned subsidiaries of the Corporate rather than being considered political entities as such. Worlds have considerable autonomy but must submit detailed reports of their activities to central government. Accountability is high.

The Corporate structure is highly efficient, with a premium placed upon education and innovation. Members of the Corporate's interstellar government and its bureaucracy tend to take the corporate lifestyle to extremes but for the majority of citizens the standard of living is high and services run efficiently. The Corporate maintains strong links with the Galian Federation, mainly along what is known as the Gateway-Sardis Run. The Run extends through a corridor of neutral systems and, although troubled by piracy, is kept open because it avoids major powers and the interference with trade that might result from crossing into and out of such a region.

The Corporate maintains close trading links with the neighbouring Renkard Union and has recently implemented a policy of backing the Union's stand against the encroaching Lords of Thunder. This policy does not extend to sending forces but corporate money has financed numerous mercenary contracts, hiring ships and troops to bolster the defences of the Union. The Corporate also heavily subsidises warship construction for the Union, which takes place in Corporate yards.

The Megusard Corporate has some trade links with the Mercantile Concord to rimward in Crucis Margin sector, although the Concord's increasing friendliness with the Lords of Thunder has cooled this relationship.

CORPORATE MILITARY

As a small power, the Corporate operates no military vessels larger than a destroyer. Most ships are much smaller, intended for piracy suppression rather than war-fighting. One innovation is the Self-Escorting Merchant Ship (SEMS) project. This is simply a ruggedised merchant vessel armed with numerous missile bays and carrying a fighter wing. Ideally, the fighters are used as pickets and to guide a missile strike launched at long range. SEMS vessels cannot hope to stand up to a real warship but can destroy most corsair craft before they can close to energy range. Other projects include Q-ships; heavily armed vessels constructed on merchant hulls intended to surprise enemies after pretending to be harmless merchants.

The military of the Corporate is fairly effective but is not inspired by any real warrior spirit. Cost-efficiency rather than outright capability is paramount, resulting in a number of self-limiting policies. However, in terms of beating off pirate raids, the Corporate Defence Force of Megusard, as it is known, is highly successful. It would be swept aside by any real military force, however.

THE RENKARD UNION

The Union comprises 20 systems on the border between Gateway and Luretir!girr sector to trailing. It is a loose organisation based upon trade and mutual interests. The Union's member worlds also paid lip service to a vaguely-worded mutual defence treaty – at least until recently. The obviously expansionistic nature of the Lords of Thunder in Luretir!girr has forced the Union to close ranks and begin presenting a unified front in the hope of deterring K'Kree aggression. This has in turn led to the creation of a Union Navy and a central defence policy.

Opinion in the Union is sharply divided as to whether it is best to deter, appease or ignore the Lords of Thunder. Differences of opinion are so violent that rioting has become commonplace as the Central Defence Policy is implemented and more than one world government has collapsed. Some individual worlds have threatened to secede from the Union altogether, although this has not yet occurred.

The Union maintains strong trade links with the Megusard Corporate to spinward and conducts some long-distance trade with the Two Thousand Worlds. This has recently been stepped up, in the hope of improving relations and influencing the Two Thousand Worlds to exert some sort of restraint over the Lords of Thunder. This hope is thought to be wildly optimistic, but nevertheless the Union is trying.

Whether the rapid militarisation of the Union will provoke or deter the Lords of Thunder, or indeed if it will have any effect at all, remains to be seen. What is certain is that the cost is beginning to bite and this, as much as differences of opinion over the policy, is dividing the Union at a time when a united front is vital.

UNION MILITARY

The Union can deploy a very mixed range of forces. There is a great deal of legacy equipment in use, left over from the days of the decentralised and inadequate naval policy. Most ships are old, poorly designed and best suited to patrol work or escort duty. They are supplemented by a range of mercenary craft which are mainly small vessels and forces deployed by other powers. The vast majority of these are from the Swanfei Independency.

The real hope for the Union is the new navy coming off the slips in the Union and in the Megusard Corporate. These vessels, constructed at TL10, are armed with missiles shipped in by the thousand from Megusard. Destroyers, system defence monitors and missile boats join the fleet almost weekly but many feel that it is too little, too late. In addition, even taking up crews from mercenary units, the merchant service and anywhere else they can be found, there is a desperate shortage of trained starfarers in the Union. This is creating a situation where highly complex ships are crewed by half-trained personnel and commanded by over-promoted officers. What the Union needs is time to shake down the ships, the squadrons and the fleet into a useful defensive tool.

Time is something the Renkard Union may not have. Incidents with hot-headed leaders from the Lords of Thunder are increasingly common and intelligence suggests forces are massing for an invasion of Renkard space. It may be a matter of months or even weeks before the trigger is pulled, whilst the Union needs years at the very least.

NON-STATE ORGANISATIONS

Several very powerful organisations exist within the region. Some are legitimate businesses with their own agenda, which may or may not be in line with the prevailing political climate, while others are semi-legal or even illegal organisations. Some of the Imperial megacorporations wield more power than any states of the Trailing Frontier other than the Imperium and indeed may have more ships and personnel than a multiworld state. However, this power is scattered across Imperial space and the region just beyond it.

Many of the organisations detailed here are based in the Imperium. Others have a home on one or more worlds beyond the Imperial border. While most have some loyalty to their parent or host state, some transcend political barriers. Certain corporations, for example, see themselves as an uber-state with holdings on many worlds across the territory of various states and non-aligned worlds. Indeed, some corporations legitimately own one or more planets. Others are the power behind the throne on several worlds.

THE CHURCH OF STELLAR DIVINITY

The Church of Stellar Divinity is the predominant religion in Gateway. Most worshippers are human but other species are welcomed into the faithful. The Church believes stars are the physical manifestation of the gods, although there are a number of heretics that interpret this basic belief in various ways.

The Church has no central authority or main holy figure but there are plenty of local factions and holy people who claim to be the central and main authority, a fact that creates some friction between branches of the church. Likewise, worshippers vary in all the ways sentient beings do. Some are good people inspired by the Church's basic tenets of tolerance, mutual understanding and avoidance of conflict but zealots do exist and some of the infighting between heretics can be vicious in the extreme. There are also powerful religious leaders who use their influence for political ends or for personal gain, and the odd messianic lunatic.

Despite this, for the most part the Church is a powerful voice for peace and tolerance in the region and beyond. Many world governments have adopted the Church as their state religion; others listen to the Church leaders' advice although it has no official place in government. A few world governments are actually composed of Church officials and some worlds feel the need to export their version of Stellar Divinity at gunpoint.

RIGHTEOUS STEVE

The individual styling himself Righteous Steve is a middle-aged Vargr, who almost certainly took the name after reinventing himself at least once. According to rumour he is a reformed pirate or perhaps a corsair lord, fleeing his dark past or vengeful enemies in the Vargr Extents. He claims to have found salvation and his calling to preach whilst passing too close to a certain star during an ill-fated voyage and has dedicated himself to good works in the hope of finding redemption. This is in all likelihood nonsense but Steve is an eloquent speaker with a huge following on many worlds. He is disliked by most leaders of the Church of Stellar Divinity for multiple reasons. Among them are a tendency to take himself less than seriously and an ability to attract donations and converts than more conventional preachers.

Righteous Steve typically dresses in stylish business-casual clothing and corrects anyone who tries to address him as a minister, priest or other formal title. He was not ordained, he says, but called. His wry wisdom and apparent understanding of the problems ordinary people face make him a popular character. Steve does not perform miracles or engage in histrionics, although his presentations are very well staged. If he is a charlatan, he is a good one and the work done by his followers speaks for itself. At any given time, Righteous Steve is surrounded by an entourage of various species but most of his following are sent to do good works all over the sector. Some wander and preach, helping where they can, but most go to well-funded projects in backwater areas where they quietly spread their religion and try to help those they can.

Steve himself is famed for his pulpit-bot style of evangelism. He and his close followers will drive across the countryside on tracked platforms, some of which have a pulpit-like superstructure. A cloud of drones films everything, including footage from quite distant areas, as Steve delivers his rather casual sermon. Musicians

and singers riding the other pulpit-bots add to the entertainment, sometimes assisted by dancers or other entertainers. The whole thing is orchestrated in real time by experts who also have to drive their bots. Whilst some find the spectacle overblown or rather silly, Righteous Steve has achieved superstar levels of popularity.

The Steve Show, as it is known, is a vehicle for Righteous Steve's teachings but more importantly his requests for donations. Money pours into offices located at starports across the region and how much of it goes into Steve's pocket is an open question. Very large sums are definitely spent on good works, however. In many cases this is low-profile work such as assisting the homeless or providing teachers in remote areas, but there are also several vessels – inevitably known as Steve Ships – outfitted for disaster-relief or other tasks. Occasionally a Steve Ship will touch down in a remote area and set up a free clinic whilst enthusiastic young people help with construction, repairs or whatever else needs doing. On other occasions they will plunge into the middle of a disaster or even a war zone, offering medical assistance and rescue to anyone who wants it.

There is much speculation about Righteous Steve's motivations. Some say he is merely a hugely successful con-man, whilst others point out that even if he is, his followers save and improve lives. There are those who question his supposed past as a pirate,and many more who seek an even darker backstory. Ex-lovers, betrayed comrades and former associates routinely emerge from the shadows to denounce Steve. His usual response is to admit yet another round of terrible sins and misdeeds and to remind everyone that he is still seeking redemption. This, more than anything else, suggests that Righteous Steve is a fake. Nobody has so many misdeeds in their past and his willingness to confess to almost any allegation is surely a poise. Yet still the donations flood in and the convoy of pulpit-bots rolls ever onward.

CORSAIRS, PIRATES AND PRIVATEERS

Most acts of piracy (including raids on ground targets) in the Gateway Domain are carried out by lone vessels often as a one-off opportunistic action. Many such pirates go back to commerce or smuggling. Those that do not usually fall afoul of the authorities or other lawbreakers when they head for a notorious pirate haunt to sell their gains. However, there are a number of career pirates and organised groups that continue their operations even although individual ships are caught or leave the pirate trade. Given the need for a safe port and reliable, discreet disposal of the loot, these career pirates cultivate a network of contacts and intimidated officials, and by this means wield a great deal of power.

None of the corsair groups in the Trailing Frontier is particularly large – rarely more than three or four vessels – and they do not normally cooperate or even communicate with one another. There is no

pirates alliance, other than in the form of corrupt world governments and a couple of states founded with pirate money. Therefore, the corsairs, while collectively an influence on the region, are not a coherent political entity. Their motivations are similar, so as a group it can be said the corsairs are in favour of less diligent patrolling and policing by naval units, corruption among local officials and similar measures that allow them to get away with what they do.

THE OWNSBEE RAIDERS

It is not clear what members of the Ownsbee Raiders call their organisation; the label has been applied by news outlets for some years now. Nor is it certain the organisation exists at all. Pirate attacks take place all across Ownsbee subsector and beyond, and cannot all be connected. However, there is reason to believe an organised pirate band is behind at least some of them. Similarities in mode of operation and the fact members have evaded capture suggests a degree of organisation beyond that of the usual opportunist raider.

In fact, there is an organised pirate band that matches the media impression of the Ownsbee Raiders. Its origins lie in a hijacked cargo of life support and manufacturing equipment intended for an outsystem installation. Equipped with this, the raiders were able to set up a small base on some rockball or planetoid, enabling their vessels to disappear for weeks or months at a time. This alone is not enough to create a successful pirate operation but the cultivation of an effective intelligence network has allowed the Raiders to avoid retaliation and strike lucrative targets.

The Raiders operate an Imperial patrol corvette – lost under unfortunate and embarrassing circumstances – and a larger armed vessel of unknown type. These ships greatly outgun their targets and can force most merchant ships to hand over cargo. A loot ship accompanies these vessels and acts as a support vessel on longer voyages. Other ships operated by the Raiders are clean and can carry their stolen cargo to market on worlds with loose law enforcement.

In general, the Raiders will take cargo, or sometimes hostages, and have been known to strip out components from a ship if they have time. They prefer not to destroy vessels or cause unnecessary casualties, and have an agreement in place with some merchant ship operators to leave them alone in return for a financial consideration. It is clear the Raiders are playing a long game, striking intermittently and in various locations then lying low for a while. Cargoes may be held for months or even years before appearing on the black market, whilst hostages are ransomed through helpful officials on certain worlds. Some of these may be in on the racket but they have no useful information on when the Raiders will be visiting or where they are based. The level of discipline required to operate in this manner and maintain secrecy is beyond the usual thugs and robbers who get into – and are quickly taken out of – the piracy game. This suggests former naval personnel or perhaps mercenaries are involved.

EQUAL SENTIENTS MOVEMENT

The ESM exists to ensure that all sentient beings within the Imperium receive the equal treatment to which they are entitled. ESM is a quiet, dignified organisation that applies pressure against world governments that are not treating their non-human citizens correctly. As might be expected in the human-dominated Imperium, the bulk of ESM's membership is non-human.

The ESM is a primarily Imperial organisation but has many adherents outside its territory. In regions where racism is prevalent, ESM members may resort to more vigorous means than the gentle campaigns of protest and education by those in Imperial space. The organisation is highly active on worlds that have recently joined the Imperium and particularly those that might be about to. Indeed, its activists are usually among the most vocal in pushing for a membership application since incorporation into the Imperium means protection under Imperial Sentients' rights laws. The ESM is generally acknowledged as a force for good but its adherents sometimes cause turbulence in areas where other parties – notably the Imperial authorities – would prefer to let the situation calm down.

THE IMPERIAL MEGACORPORATIONS

All of the Imperial megacorporations are active in the Imperial part of the region but only some have interests in Gateway. The megacorps are all hugely powerful commercial entities, with a range of interests. Their resources are beyond what any single world (or even most subsectors) can bring to bear but are scattered across a huge area.

The leaders of the megacorps are now all Imperial nobles. The Imperium is built upon trade and economics, so it is hardly surprising that many of its nobles are businesspersons and that a megacorporate official has not only their own company resources to deploy but also personal troops, and of course a corporate noble has the ear of others of similar rank. As a result, megacorps have a habit of getting what they want.

Within Imperial territory, megacorporations generally operate in an atmosphere of enlightened self-interest. The Imperium provides a good environment in which to do business, so disrupting it is not usually desirable. Actions that damage Imperial interests or violate Imperial High Law also tend to have serious consequences and the megacorps have a lot to lose. However, rivalry can spill over into Trade War and local megacorp leaders may sometimes act at cross-purposes to the political leaders of the Imperium. Corruption within the corporations is not unknown, either.

Outside Imperial territory, the attitude of the megacorporations varies. Some are simply there to make money and will do whatever it takes to create a short or long-term profit. Others are playing a longer or more complex game, perhaps intending to develop a region to benefit the Imperium as a whole and thereby gain influence or support for some project elsewhere.

DELGADO TRADING

Delgado is the most recent of the Imperial megacorporations to emerge. It was founded in 997 from a collection of huge firms and business interests which coalesced to form a huge Business Group. Delgado's interests include military equipment and minerals, plus general trading. The corporation operates a fleet of large freighters and is notorious for its employment policies, which favour a small number of employees at the expense of the majority. Delgado is fairly active in Gateway, running regular freighters into the Galian League. Smaller but well-armed merchant ships ply all the way out to Sardis in the Megusard Corporate. It is an open secret that Delgado is doing well out of the Lords of Thunder threat, with frequent shipments of military hardware heading out to trailing and finding their way into the hands of those most afraid of K'Kree aggression.

GENERAL PRODUCTS LEY

General is a manufacturing conglomerate that deals mainly in heavy equipment such as starships and vehicles. General has a few plants in Ley, the largest of which supplies the yards of its subsidiary, General Starships Ley, with heavy components such as reactors and hull sections. GPL has major shipyards situated at Dukh, where they contribute considerably to the local economy. This gives General Products considerable influence with the sector duke.

GESCHICHTKREIS STERNSCIFFBAU AG

GsbAG, unofficially known as Gasbag, is primarily a shipbuilding firm. It operates a number of small yards throughout Ley, generally operating in the commercial and general-purpose markets and building smaller vessels. GsbAG has been repeatedly outbid or otherwise lost out on major contracts for navy ships to General Products and has developed a tendency not to waste money trying to compete. Instead, it is highly active in the private and world-government sectors. The firm also operates a number of specialised research institutes throughout the sector.

HORTALEZ ET CIE

Hortalez deals in finance, providing capital and financial services to other businesses. Its operations in Ley were based at Dukh until 1038, at which point a move to the new Domain capital, Annapabar, began. This was accomplished without serious disruption to operations and was accompanied by the opening of small regional offices outside the Imperial border in Gateway and Glimmerdrift Reaches sectors. Hortalez is known to be bankrolling a number of projects along the Imperial frontier, most connected with development of markets for Imperial goods or suppliers of unusual items.

IMPERIALLINES

A shipping firm owned by the Imperial family, Imperiallines mainly serves the major routes but vessels are sometimes encountered on minor routes. Vessels are very secure and of high quality; many serve as reserve transports for the Navy and are armed accordingly. Technically, Imperiallines is not a megacorporation but recent growth suggests it will soon achieve that status. Imperiallines runs only one service outside the Imperial border in the Trailing Frontier, a heavily escorted secure liner service to Gateway. It is unlikely any significant profit is being made on this run, suggesting it has a diplomatic purpose or is intended to allow the transport of personnel and items without attracting the sort of attention a naval expedition might.

INSTELLARMS

Instellarms deals in weaponry and trained mercenary personnel. The firm offers an accreditation and registration service for mercenary units and individuals, and is renowned for its strictly legal dealings. Instellarms deals mainly with bulk orders. Its subsidiary, Portcullis Defence, manufactures and markets a range of quality weaponry across Ley and on some worlds

in Gateway. Whilst Instellarms only occasionally deals outside the Imperial border, Portcullis has a whole chain of sales facilities and a few regional manufacturing centres.

LING STANDARD PRODUCTS

LSP is active in the fields of mining, vehicles, weaponry and high-technology equipment. The firm not only manufactures equipment but in some cases operates it; LSP has outsystem mining operations in several areas of Gateway. These are rarely popular with local governments, who routinely send protests to the Archduke of Gateway that LSP mining platforms are illegally operating in their outsystem. LSP usually cites the defence that a government which does not secure its own system cannot claim it as sovereign territory.

MAKHIDKARUN

A general electronics giant, Makhidkarun produces a wide range of consumer products and is also a major defence contractor, supplying electronic systems to the Imperial armed forces. It has installations on several worlds in Ley but is not known to operate outside the Imperial border in this region. Shipments of advanced electronics are sometimes sold to non-Imperial clients by way of third parties at ports along the border.

NAASIRKA

Another electronics firm, Naasirka deals mainly in computer equipment and robotics. The firm maintains a major research and development facility in Ley and has manufacturing plants on several worlds. Naasirka is one of the most active megacorporations outside the Imperium, with facilities on several worlds in Gateway. These are typically operated under complex co-ownership arrangements with local governments.

One result of these over-complicated arrangements is that it is difficult to discern the exact level of Naasirka involvement in any given economy.

SCHUNAMANN UND SOHN, AG

SuSAG is the market leader in chemicals and pharmaceuticals. The firm's facilities are widespread throughout Ley and sponsored medical facilities can be found on many low-tech worlds. There are no known SuSAG facilities in Gateway, although products are exported through third parties and can be found for sale right across the Trailing Frontier. In Gateway, the SuSAG logo is considered a guarantee of quality and therefore worth a premium price, which has prompted a number of small firms to start counterfeiting the megacorp's products.

SHARURSHID

Sharurshid is in business to do business. The firm engages in trade rather than manufacturing and offers a brokerage service at most large starports. Sharurshid can be encountered anywhere where there is money to be made. It maintains a few offices outside the Imperial border, with roving brokers operating from trade scout vessels across Gateway. These individuals are constantly on the move, searching for a new market or source of interesting goods. Their movements are generally unpredictable but those with a similar eye for potential profit can usually figure out where one will show up sooner or later.

STERNMETAL HORIZONS LIC

Sternmetal is most famous for its mining equipment and operations but is also active in power generation and manufacturing. Sternmetal does not do things by halves – if the firm moves into a region, it will bring in a whole colony of workers and their families, and support

them while they get the job done. Whilst other Imperial megacorporations have a small presence in Gateway intended to produce profits back home, Sternmetal Horizons is highly active. It has a major operation based out of Trindel and is thought to be funding some of the Trindel Confederacy's endeavours.

TUKERA LINES

Tukera is the most famous shipping line. Its vessels are encountered on major shipping lanes, conducting regular services rather than speculative trading. Tukera trains its people well and rewards loyalty. Vessels are well protected by their own armaments and security personnel. Tukera vessels are generally encountered on the main trade arteries of Ley and almost never beyond the Imperial border.

ZIRUNKARIISH

Zirunkariish is an investment firm which mainly funds the development of mid-tech worlds and starports on major routes. The firm owns and runs several ports in Ley as subsidiaries. It has also invested in a number of ports on the Ley-Gateway trade routes but does not seem interested in pushing further trailingward.

THE LOYAL SECTOR GUARD

The Loyal Sector Guard emerged in the 990s as an illegal but popular militia movement inspired by a range of threats. Upheaval caused by internal division was one oft-cited problem along with imminent attack by Solomani or K'Kree agents. The organisation had some powerful supporters, creating a difficult situation for the archducal authorities. The leaders of the LSG were, in some ways at least, astute. They put detachments of well-spoken, friendly and impeccably behaved young warriors in places the archducal administration considered unimportant, and won small-scale support by protecting the people there. Although illegal, closing down the Loyal Sector Guard would have meant pulling the protectors out and replacing them with nothing.

The stated purpose of the Loyal Sector Guard has not changed in a century. It exists to defend the lives and property of Imperial citizens from all threats. This is the same mission as the Imperial armed forces and the existence of the LSG is taken as an affront by some senior military and naval officials. The LSG is formed from assets donated by various members: noble household troops, mercenary units, planetary armed forces, corporate security units and some specially-raised forces. It consists mainly of ground-combat units equipped as mid-tech light infantry, optimised for a local security rather than warfighting role. The organisation does have a number of starships and battlefield-capable military forces.

The LSG has its own rank and pay structure, a uniform, and a strict code of conduct for its members, all of whom take a personal oath of loyalty to the Imperium, her citizens and the emperor. The order these are phrased in is of concern to some observers, who – not without some justification – claim the LSG is a revolutionary army-in-waiting. Pro-LSG factions cite a century of quiet, dedicated service to the people of Ley even when the squabbles or money-grabbing of the nobility worked against their interests.

Over the last century the LSG has changed considerably. It was always illegal, since Imperial law generally prohibits the creation of multiworld armed forces paralleling the Imperial services but was tolerated until 922 when it was declared a proscribed organisation. The LSG reluctantly dismantled itself, making sure there was a PR backlash against the archduke and continued as a semi-underground organisation. Investigation concluded the remaining chapters of the LSG were harmless social groups for well-connected misfits.

The LSG continued in this form into the 1050s, when the proscription mysteriously ended. Nothing happened at first but by 1080 numerous LSG chapters were operating openly at universities across Ley. What had been considered a rather sinister potential revolutionary militia had become a drinking house for fashionably unconventional individuals. Not coincidentally, many were well-off graduates; the sort who move on into important posts.

Today, the Loyal Sector Guard is perceived as a social club for socially ambitious and rich people, who loudly proclaim their loyalty to the people of Ley but generally do little. Lower ranks of the organisation are generally made up of those who want to get access to the rich and influential figures at the top. The general atmosphere is one of dressing-up and playing at being a political movement. There are parades and festivals at which members get to wear dashing uniforms and feel they are part of something special. It is all rather harmless.

However, within the LSG is a group who consider the Lords of Thunder to be an imminent existential threat to the people of Ley and all of Humaniti. They have enormous funds to work with, largely obtained from the rich and influential members making all the noise at

the top of the organisation. Those who seem inclined to do something are approached about really making a difference and end up moving into an entirely different Loyal Sector Guard. These members wear the same uniform and attend the same parties but also disappear for months on end. When they return, they have stories to tell about adventures in Gateway, which sometimes inspires others to take this route.

The Loyal Sector Guard, ironically perhaps, does most of its active work in Gateway. It supplies the same sort of security detachments as the original incarnation, but to non-Imperial worlds. Technicians and educators are also sent to those who need them, generally at no cost. The organisation also operates several general assistance vessels which fly around Gateway helping anyone who needs it. They generate considerable goodwill towards the Imperium as a whole and the Guard in particular, which not coincidentally translates into a grassroots intelligence network feeding information back to Ley. It may be that the LSG knows more about the real situation on some worlds than the Imperial intelligence agencies and it is willing to supply this information in return for money or favours.

It appears this effort is a genuine initiative to harden Gateway against the Lords of Thunder. It is accompanied by the raising and training of non-LSG troops under the guise of the Gateway Legion. These personnel are specifically trained to fight K'Kree and deploy to contested worlds – not always with local permission – to assist in their defence. The Lords of Thunder are aware of the Gateway Legion's backers and routinely demand the Imperium close the Loyal Sector Guard down.

Gateway Legion forces are similar to those operated by the LSG. Ground combat units are typically equipped to TL8, with higher-tech aerospace and anti-armour equipment available. Space forces consist mainly of converted merchant ships operating as cheap fighters, although there are rumours of powerful but obsolete warships quietly bought up on the disposal market.

It has been suggested the LSG is deliberately trying to provoke conflict between the Imperium and the Lords of Thunder. Some of its adherents have been quoted as saying '*better now than in the middle of our next civil war*' but it is unclear whether this is the view of the true anti-K'Kree faction or just posturing by rich faux-hawks. Similarly, there are those who wonder if the LSG is using the situation with the K'Kree for political or economic advantage within the Imperium – risking an external war for internal reasons. Be that as it may, the Loyal Sector Guard seems to have reinvented itself as both a harmless social club and a hardcore opponent of K'Kree expansion.

THE FREE PEOPLES ALLIANCE

The FPA was formed in the 700s as a counter to Imperial expansion and potential aggression. It is part political movement and part guerrilla force. The FPA generally does not oppose Imperial interests directly but instead provides small arms, cash and advice to other organisations engaged in direct action. It is known to have extensive criminal contacts within the Imperium, who are willing to supply weaponry to those with the cash to pay for it. This includes Imperial Army equipment misdirected from its shipping destination.

The extent of the FPA is unknown. It is likely its core assets are quite small but connections with various power groups, commercial interests and dissident organisations allow it to wield a great deal of power. The FPA has a number of blockade-runners available, mainly small merchant craft, used to deliver aid to those fighting the Imperium.

LONG NIGHT REMEMBRANCE

A violently anti-Solomani movement, LNR's title refers to the collapse of the First (or Vilani) Imperium into the Long Night, an event that the pro-Vilani members of LNR blame entirely upon the Solomani. LNR was once a noisy but peaceful political movement and as such was tolerated by the Imperial authorities. However, in the Solomani Rim War period its members carried out a bitter campaign of murder, intimidation and terrorism on several worlds, and the organisation is now officially banned within the Imperium.

Numbers and membership of the LNR are of course not known. It is likely the group has the backing of high-up Imperial nobles of pro-Vilani leanings but thus far nothing has been proven. At present the main function of the LNR is to provide funding and a platform to those with anti-Solomani leanings. As such, it is much more active in the sectors neighbouring the Solomani Rim than in Ley but there are always those keen to denounce their opponents on vid shows and the LNR supports them where it finds them. The organisation has links to a movement within the Church of Stellar Divinity which preaches that some stars are wrong and that most of those can be found in Solomani Space. This faction sometimes refers to Solomani people and businesses as children of an evil star, and has gone as far as to incite riots and persecution.

MATARISHAN FREEDOM MOVEMENT

The MFM promotes autonomy and even independence for former worlds of the Matarishan Federation. It is primarily a peaceful political movement which works through rallies, political pressure and similar legal means. However, the MFM does undertake more dubious activities. Its legal experts are quick to offer their services – for free – to anyone involved in a legal dispute with Imperial interests and its expert agitators will advise any dissident group on how best to (legally) make a nuisance of themselves.

The MFM is thought to have funded more radical activities at various times, such as sabotage or even groups such as the Matarishan Liberation Army. The MLA is a guerrilla, but carefully not terrorist, force that attempts the occasional covert strike against Imperial or megacorporate assets. This link has never been proven and it is likely that the MFM as such is clean, although quite willing to encourage others to attempt armed resistance to the Imperials.

NON-IMPERIAL UPERCORPORATIONS

Huge mercantile or industrial conglomerates similar to the Imperial megacorps do exist outside the Imperium. Far larger and more powerful than any planetary corporation, these supercorps are more limited in the scope and distribution of their activities but can rival the megacorporations in terms of local influence. In addition, a great many supercorps smaller firms exist across the Trailing Frontier. Those listed here are the ones with enough economic power to make their influence felt in political circles.

THE DEEPNIGHT CORPORATION

Normally associated with long-range exploration and missions into areas of rift, the Deepnight Corporation has interests in Gateway that go beyond the Lesser Rift. In addition to two very large ships working the Lesser Rift, the Deepnight Corporation has a number of smaller ships collecting data and investigating backwater worlds in Gateway.

FOUR SECTORS ARMS

Four Sectors is a large business group similar to Instellarms in the Imperium. However, where Instellarms deals in mercenaries as well as weaponry, Four Sectors is purely a provider of hardware. Its sales policies vary from region-to-region but are for the most part rather loose. Four Sectors has even been known to bankroll planetary insurrections for its own ends.

GATEWAY SHIPPING (GS)

Gateway Shipping is a sector-wide firm that constructs starships, trains their crews and operates the vessels on behalf of client worlds. Specialising in bulk transports and secure couriers, GS maintains offices at many worlds of the former Galian Trade League and smaller facilities elsewhere. The firm appears not to have a political agenda besides gaining a monopoly on the bulk shipping market.

GATEWAY METALS (GM)

A successor to the ancient and hugely successful Galastrian Metals, GM is a major mining and industrial concern based out of Gateway Prime. Its facilities can be found across the sector and even in the coreward end of Crucis Margin.

MAE LINES

Founded by Marcus Aaron Erechs before his elevation to the post of archduke, MAE Lines has long been the foundation of the Erechs dynasty's wealth. It consists of numerous small and medium-sized passenger ships and freightliners which traditionally operated in the rimward end of Ley. Since the deposition of Archduke Stephen Erechs, MAE Lines has shifted its emphasis. Some vessels now serve as auxiliaries for the Loyal Sector Guard and the former archduke's own forces in the region known as The Gate. Those still operating as commercial ships primarily carry out cross-border trade centring on the former archduke's new baronial seat at Zuge.

TRASARIAN FACTORS, INCORPORATED

Trasarian is an old firm with offices across Gateway, Glimmerdrift Reaches and Crucis Margin. Trasarian deals mainly in cargo brokerage, insurance and finance. Its true worth is unknown but probably staggering. Trasarian has several world governments in its pocket and is well known for interfering in local affairs in order to gain a greater profit margin.

LEY SECTOR

Bounded to coreward-trailing and rimward-spinward by areas of rift, Ley lies at the very edge of the Third Imperium. The sector is a gateway into or out of Imperial space, which along with the adjoining sector name is a reason the Imperial Domain was named Gateway and not Ley. This route is important to trade and other missions directed towards the Hive Federation and Two Thousand Worlds. Fornast, lying to spinward, leads to the Imperial Core, while some trade comes in from Antares and Empty Quarter sectors to spinward-coreward and coreward respectively. Other than a few worlds in the Glimmerdrift Reaches to rimward, Ley has no other borders with Imperial space.

Travel into Gateway, located directly to trailing, is somewhat limited. The most practical jump-2 route runs through independent space dominated by the powerful world of Phoniwt. Higher-jump ships have more choice but this fact of astrography still imposes restrictions on Imperial interests in that direction. Access to Glimmerdrift Reaches to rimward is much easier. Several worlds in this sector belong to the Imperium and Imperial trade ships move across the border with considerable frequency.

Ley has certain distinct astrographical regions. The four spinward-coreward subsectors (Ikhnaton, Nightmare, Spearhead and Guadix Drift) have the greatest star density of the sector and are unofficially known as the Daramm Sphere. The majority of worlds in this part of the sector lie in the Great Ley Cluster or the Reaching Arm, a long main giving jump-1 or jump-2 access to most of the sector. The Gateway Main enters the sector from coreward of the Great Ley Cluster, giving jump-2 access to the large Riftsedge Cluster. Trade and information from Antares Sector and the core of the Imperium generally arrive in Ley along these two mains.

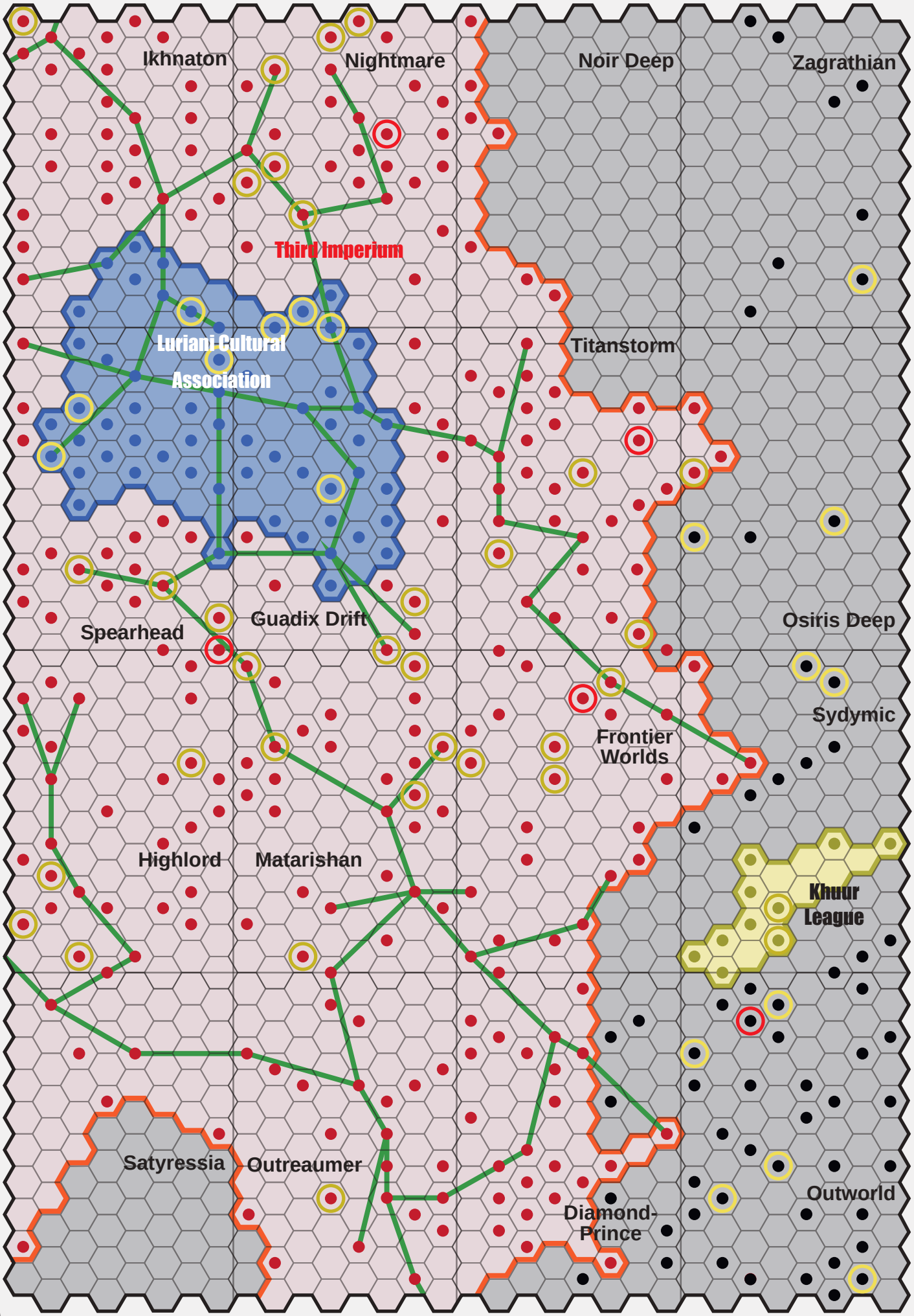
It is no coincidence the Daramm Sphere is the most developed part of the sector, with much in common with the Imperial heartlands. The fringes of Ley have more of a frontier feeling to them but most citizens of these four subsectors would consider themselves to be far from the borders in terms of culture, outlook and interest in what goes on outside the Imperium. The exception is trading companies interested in the transborder markets and Imperial officials charged with keeping an eye on external affairs.

The sector economy is largely centred in the Daramm Sphere, which have a number of highly developed market worlds such as Rurur. This world is the headquarters for the regional operations branch of Tukera Lines, which maintains a private repair and refit yard. Tukera vessels operate mainly on the internal lines between the major worlds of the sector and operate services into Fornast and Antares sectors. Tukera has little interest in the frontier regions of the sector and virtually none in trans-border operations.

The region trailingward of the Daramm Sphere is largely empty space forming part of the Lesser Rift or the various Riftfingers. Isolated worlds lie in these vast gulfs but the majority of inhabited worlds are found in Titanstorm subsector. These mostly lie on the end of the Reaching Arm or in the Riftsedge Cluster. The Lesser Rift provides a safe border, making this area very much an internal Imperial region despite lying on its outer fringe. Culturally, the region is mainly Imperial, although strong influences still exist from the many years of isolation and independence after the Long Night. Whilst most worlds are loyal Imperial members, quite major cultural variations do exist.

To rimward of the Daramm Sphere, stellar density is much lower. Satyressia subsector in particular is very sparse. This creates a barrier between this part of Ley and the rest of the Imperium, and as a result the area receives little interstellar traffic. Elsewhere there is more trade but it is mostly local to the clusters with the occasional large freighter connecting them to the sector economy as a whole. The most significant astrographic feature of this end of the sector is the Serpent Main, which runs through Diamond-Prince and Outreaumer subsectors. The Serpent Main gives jump-2 access the Annapabar Cluster, which is one of the most politically and economically important areas of the sector.

The Annapabar Cluster was for a time designated the Imperial Trade Cluster and is still unofficially referred to as the ITC. This region was the focus of a great deal of investment during the period immediately after the Domain capital was moved there, although this focused mainly on starport development and some supporting


Ikhnaton
Nightmare
Noir Deep
Zagrathian
Third Imperium
Luriani Cultural Association
Titanstorm
Spearhead
Guadix Drift
Osiris Deep
Sydymic
Frontier Worlds
Highlord
Matarishan
Khuur League
Satyressia
Outreaumer
Outworld
Diamond-Prince

industries. The cluster is the marshalling point for most trade moving out of the Imperial borders towards Gateway and for goods coming in by the same route. A great deal of money is made from trade and commerce in this area, but since the local worlds mostly have low populations, their industrial base is insignificant.

The naval base at Zuge is almost entirely dedicated to protecting Imperial interests in Outworld subsector. It has a greater than usual complement of small patrol craft and a few destroyers. These range across Outworld or sit over worlds there as guardships. Cruisers and larger patrol vessels stage through this base as well, usually heading out into Gateway. The base at Glen Murdoch is more concerned with securing and defending the cluster. This mission includes customs checks on vessels crossing the Imperial border as well as ensuring the cluster is a safe place to conduct commerce.

The trailing-rimward corner of Ley contains a considerable number of non-Imperial worlds. The only significant polity is the Khuur League but the world of Phoniwt also wields considerable influence. These worlds lie in a strategically important region, as far as the Imperium is concerned, and are very much an area of interest. How this translates to action and relations depends on internal factors and can vary considerably. So long as the trade lane out to Gateway bypassing the League and Phoniwt remains open, the situation is generally satisfactory. Long-term plans to annex and fortify the area have progressed little in a century.

The sector capital and main naval base are at Dukh, which lies close to the centre of the sector and dominates the economy of the Dukh Cluster. However, the Dukh Cluster is a little isolated due to astrography and as a result much of the sector administrative apparatus is at Daramm, five parsecs away. Petitioners and protestors tend to head for Daramm due to ease of access, a situation that suits the sector administration. The systems around Daramm are designated the Luriani Cultural Association and neighbouring worlds are strongly influenced by Luriani culture. This influence spreads out to the surrounding regions to some degree but in most of the sector hundreds of years of Imperial dominance have created a more typical Imperial-standard-with-minor-local-variations culture.

Within the Imperial border there are supposedly no multiworld powers but the Luriani Cultural Association comes close to being one. Its unusual mix of Luriani, Terran and Vilani culture is protected by Imperial laws and along with traditional ties, creates an unofficial internal alliance with significant political and economic

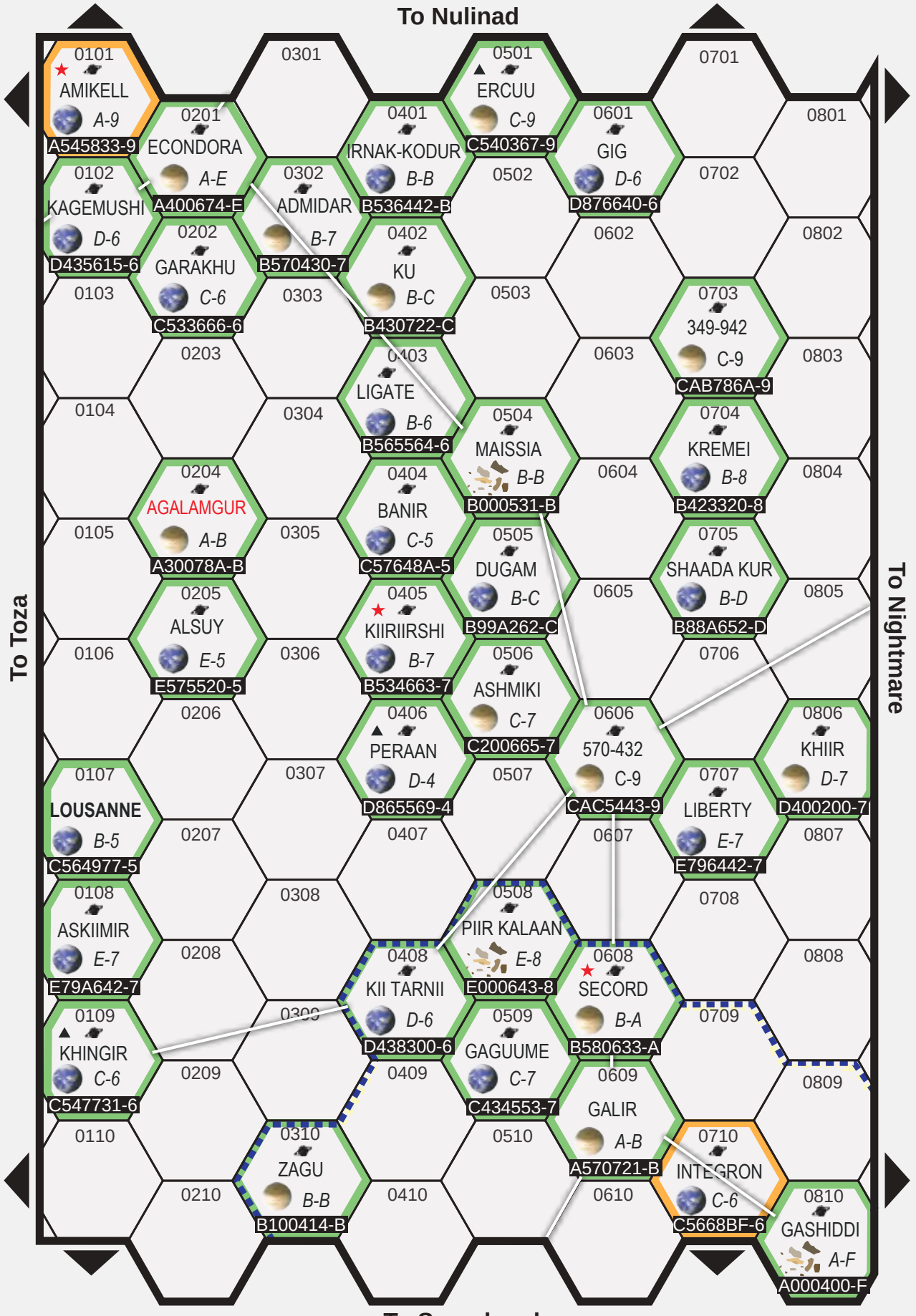
power. This loose but very well-established affinity has resulted in the worlds of the LCA heavily influencing the actions of the sector duke and the archduke – or opposing them to the point of creating a protracted power struggle. This is one of the factors restricting development of the sector and expansion beyond.

The vast majority of people in Ley are human (of various types) with the largest minorities being Vargr in Imperial space. Various minor species are present as part of the Imperium or native to one of the worlds of the region. The majority of the sector is Imperial territory, with most of the remaining worlds either independent or forming part of the Khuur League. Leaving Imperial space to trailing or rimward (around the rift edges) will take Travellers into a region of independent worlds, pocket empires and client states. Some of these polities have a human population, some are alien and many are mixed. This area lies between the Imperium and the Two Thousand Worlds (to trailing) and the Hive Federation (to rimward-trailing). Intrigue is common among the minor states in the region.

The worlds of Daramm and Shamokin maintain large naval yards capable of constructing Dreadnought-class ships, although Shamokin specialises in cruiser and destroyer sized vessels for the most part. Most of the sector's major naval units are concentrated around the Dukh naval complex and the depot in the Ugiirkidan system (1420). The sector fleet is understrength and poorly equipped but the subsector fleets are up to the task of protecting commerce and keeping the peace. Lighter forces are maintained throughout the sector, with elements of the Imperial Navy forward-deployed in the territory of the Galian Federation.

KHNATON SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
349-942	0703	—	CAB786A-9	—	—	Imperium	G
570-432	0606	—	CAC5443-9	Fl Ni	—	Imperium	G
Admidar	0302	—	B570430-7	De He Ni	—	Imperium	G
Agalamgur	0204	—	A30078A-B	Va	—	Imperium	G
Alsuy	0205	—	E575520-5	Ag Lt Ni	—	Imperium	G
Amikell	0101	N	A545833-9	—	A	Imperium	G
Ashmiki	0506	—	C200665-7	Na Ni Va	—	Imperium	G
Askiimir	0108	—	E79A642-7	Ni Wa	—	Imperium	G
Banir	0404	—	C57648A-5	Lt Ni	—	Imperium	G
Dugam	0505	—	B99A262-C	Ht Lo Wa	—	Imperium	G
Econdora	0201	—	A400674-E	Ht Ni Va	—	Imperium	G
Ercuu	0501	S	C540367-9	De He Lo Po	—	Imperium	G
Gaguume	0509	—	C434553-7	Ni	—	Luriani	G
Galir	0609	—	A570721-B	De He	—	Luriani	—
Garakhu	0202	—	C533666-6	Ni Po	—	Imperium	G
Gashiddi	0810	—	A000400-F	As Ht Ni Va	—	Luriani	G
Gig	0601	—	D876640-6	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Integron	0710	—	C5668BF-6	Ri	A	Luriani	G
Irnak-Kodur	0401	—	B536442-B	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Kagemushi	0102	—	D435615-6	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Khiir	0806	—	D400200-7	Lo Va	—	Imperium	G
Khingir	0109	S	C547731-6	Ag	—	Imperium	G
Kii Tarnii	0408	—	D438300-6	Lo	—	Luriani	G
Kiiriirshi	0405	N	B534663-7	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Kremei	0704	—	B423320-8	Lo Po	—	Imperium	G
Ku	0402	—	B430722-C	De Ht Na Po	—	Imperium	G
Liberty	0707	—	E796442-7	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Ligate	0403	—	B565564-6	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Lousanne	0107	—	C564977-5	Hi Lt	—	Imperium	—
Maissia	0504	—	B000531-B	As Ni Va	—	Imperium	G
Peraan	0406	S	D865569-4	Ag Ga Lt Ni	—	Imperium	G
Piir Kalaan	0508	—	E000643-8	As Ni Va	—	Luriani	G
Secord	0608	N	B580633-A	De Ni Ri	—	Luriani	G
Shaada Kur	0705	—	B88A652-D	Ht Ni Ri Wa	—	Imperium	G
Zagu	0310	—	B100414-B	Ni Va	—	Luriani	G


To Nulinad
To Toza
To Nightmare
To Spearhead
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A-9
A545833-9
0201
ECONDORA
A-E
A400674-E
0301
0401
IRNAK-KODUR
B-B
B536442-B
0501
ERCUU
C-9
C540367-9
0601
GIG
D-6
D876640-6
0701
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KAGEMUSHI
D-6
D435615-6
0202
GARAKHU
C-6
C533666-6
0302
ADMIDAR
B-7
B570430-7
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B000531-B
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B-8
B423320-8
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AGALAMGUR
A-B
A30078A-B
0404
BANIR
C-5
C57648A-5
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DUGAM
B-C
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0705
SHAADA KUR
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ALSUY
E-5
E575520-5
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KIIRIIRSHI
B-7
B534663-7
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ASHMIKI
C-7
C200665-7
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PERAAN
D-4
D865569-4
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570-432
C-9
CAC5443-9
0806
KHIIR
D-7
D400200-7
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LOUSANNE
B-5
C564977-5
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LIBERTY
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E796442-7
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ASKIIMIR
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E79A642-7
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PIIR KALAAN
E-8
E000643-8
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B580633-A
0808
0109
KHINGIR
C-6
C547731-6
0309
0509
GAGUUME
C-7
C434553-7
0709
0209
0409
0609
GALIR
A-B
A570721-B
0809
0110
0310
ZAGU
B-B
B100414-B
0510
0710
INTEGRON
C-6
C5668BF-6
0210
0410
0610
0810
GASHIDDI
A-F
A000400-F
A
LEY
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
★ Imperial Naval Base
▲ Imperial Scout Base
Secure System
Amber Zone
X-boat Route
Asteroids (no atmosphere/water)
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)
Luriani Cultural Association Border

The Ikhnaton subsector lies at the spinward-coreward corner of Ley and is very much an internal Imperial region. It contains 35 star systems with an average Tech Level of 8. Approximately 85% of the subsector's population dwell in a TL5 society on the world of Lousanne, with about a billion people scattered across the rest of the subsector. There are no uninhabited star systems but some are of little economic or industrial value.

The majority of worlds in Ikhnaton lie on the Gateway Main, with considerable jump-1 traffic moving up and down on a constant basis. Security is provided by the 17th Fleet, on paper a typical subsector fleet. The bases at Amikell and Kiiriirshi are small, hosting patrol craft and a few destroyers at most. Their remit is patrol of the subsector, which is generally safe and secure. The naval base at Secord, within the Luriani Cultural Association, is a fleet base used primarily by assets of the Ley Sector Fleet. It does host some subsector fleet assets for local security but its primary function is to support warfighting elements of the navy, such as battleships and cruisers plus their support vessels.

The businesses of the Ley Sector Commercial Alliance (LSCA) are highly active in Ikhnaton, competing as a bloc against other interests. Their main opponents are the Sharurshid and Tukera megacorporations, both of whom traditionally have interests in the area. The prize in their struggle is control of the lucrative trade routes to and from the rest of the Imperium. For the most part, the conflict is limited to business competition and legal obstacles thrown in one another's way but the occasional covert operation by mercenaries or elements of a security service will derail a plan or set up a political and legal gambit. This sort of cut-throat competition is acceptable to the Imperium so long as the economy as a whole is not harmed.

KIIRIIRSHI

Kiiriirshi is a balkanised world with a total population of around eight million. Its very thin atmosphere limits plant life to lichens and similar forms, and might not be sufficient to retain liquid water if the surface temperature were not so low. The world lies on the outer edge of the system's warm zone and is only barely habitable without sophisticated equipment. As a result, the world's seas are covered in a thick layer of ice which is broken in places near thermal vents. Cities are small and widely spread out, mostly located near a sea from which water is desalinated to irrigate vast glazed-over farms.

The cities of Kiiriirshi are more or less self-governing, each with its own spaceport connecting to the large orbital highport. This is a stopover for shipping plying the Gateway Main but the port itself is owned by a commercial consortium rather than the non-existent world government. A small percentage of profits are shared between the city-states, providing a modest income which is insufficient to support major investment. The real ruler of Kiiriirshi is the Imperial Navy, which placed the headquarters of the subsector fleet in a large, purpose-built installation near the equator.

Although the naval installation and associated city represent the largest and most technologically advanced community on Kiiriirshi, they are officially offworld holdings and not considered part of the planetary population. However, since its construction the installation has provided mediators and assistance in various crises and its commandant is generally viewed as the closest thing to a planetary leader Kiiriirshi will ever have. The world is effectively a military dictatorship but a voluntary and peaceable one.

The groundside naval installation houses only a few starships. Most are based at an orbital mooring which orbits opposite to the highport. Facilities there are basic since personnel can go planetside aboard a constant cycle of shuttles. These also visit the city-states, which derive additional income from personnel on leave. Overall, the navy is well-liked on Kiiriirshi and most cities have a pre-enlistment education

KIIRIIRSHI

UWP	C534663–7	
Starport	B	Routine
Size	5	8,000km
Atmosphere	3	Very Thin
Hydrosphere	4	40%
Population	6	Millions
Government Type	6	Captive Government/ Colony
Law Level	3	Machine guns, automatic rifles prohibited
Technology Level	7	Miniaturised Electronics

package run by naval personnel on secondment. A surprisingly large proportion of the population end up joining the navy or a supporting industry. This is not really to the benefit of the cities, as most venturing out into the wider universe never come back. This makes Kiiriirshi one of the many worlds which contribute more to the Imperium than they receive in return, but on the whole the populace seem content this way.

LOUSANNE

Lousanne is an entirely habitable, if dry, world on the spinward fringe of Ley. It is home to around seven billion people, almost all humans, divided among three planetary superpowers and multiple smaller states. Lousanne's history, almost since the day it was colonised, has been characterised by friction and outbreaks of violence. At any given time, there are insurgencies or low-intensity conflicts going on in several parts of the world, with major wars breaking out less often but causing greater disruption.

In an effort to limit the violence, quotas have been placed on the amount and type of military hardware it is permissible to bring in, and mercenary operations are subject to stricter rules than elsewhere. A division of the Imperial Army is stationed at the downport to enforce its neutrality, along with aerospace defence forces and air units. Beyond the no-fly, no-fight zone, Lousanne is something of a free-for-all but has not been given an amber travel designation. This is mainly because the port is very safe and visitors rarely venture beyond it.

The world's Class C starport is large but basic. The surrounding startown has military zones for Imperial troops and a wider residential area with little industry. The population has been steadily growing, as refugees leave a troubled area and seek the safety of the port. This is not a huge problem since the Imperial Army spends a lot of money in the town, supporting a vibrant entertainment industry. The port is becoming famous for its bars, restaurants and even high-end theatres, attracting a monied clientele from offworld. This has created a sharp divide between the squabbling nations of Lousanne, impoverished by over-sized militaries and the startown population who enjoy prosperity so long as the world's troubles continue.

LOUSANNE

UWP	C564977–5	
Starport	C	Routine
Size	5	8,000km
Atmosphere	6	Standard
Hydrosphere	4	40%
Population	9	Billions
Government Type	7	Balkanisation
Law Level	7	Shotguns prohibited
Technology Level	5	Mass Production

MONEY AND POLITICS IN IKHNATON

Ikhnaton is an internal subsector of the Imperium and has the problems of one. Its markets and starports are well established, with solid information available on local conditions to anyone willing to seek it out or pay for it. World governments are minor players in the politics of the subsector compared to the megacorporations and business groups that dominate its economy and politics.

For those seeking a relatively safe and genteel place to find a job or make a modest profit, regions like this are attractive due to their stability. The big money, however, is to be made from disrupting that stability. Markets can be manipulated by interfering with trade ships, although this is risky as various Imperial High Laws forbid actions that damage the economy.

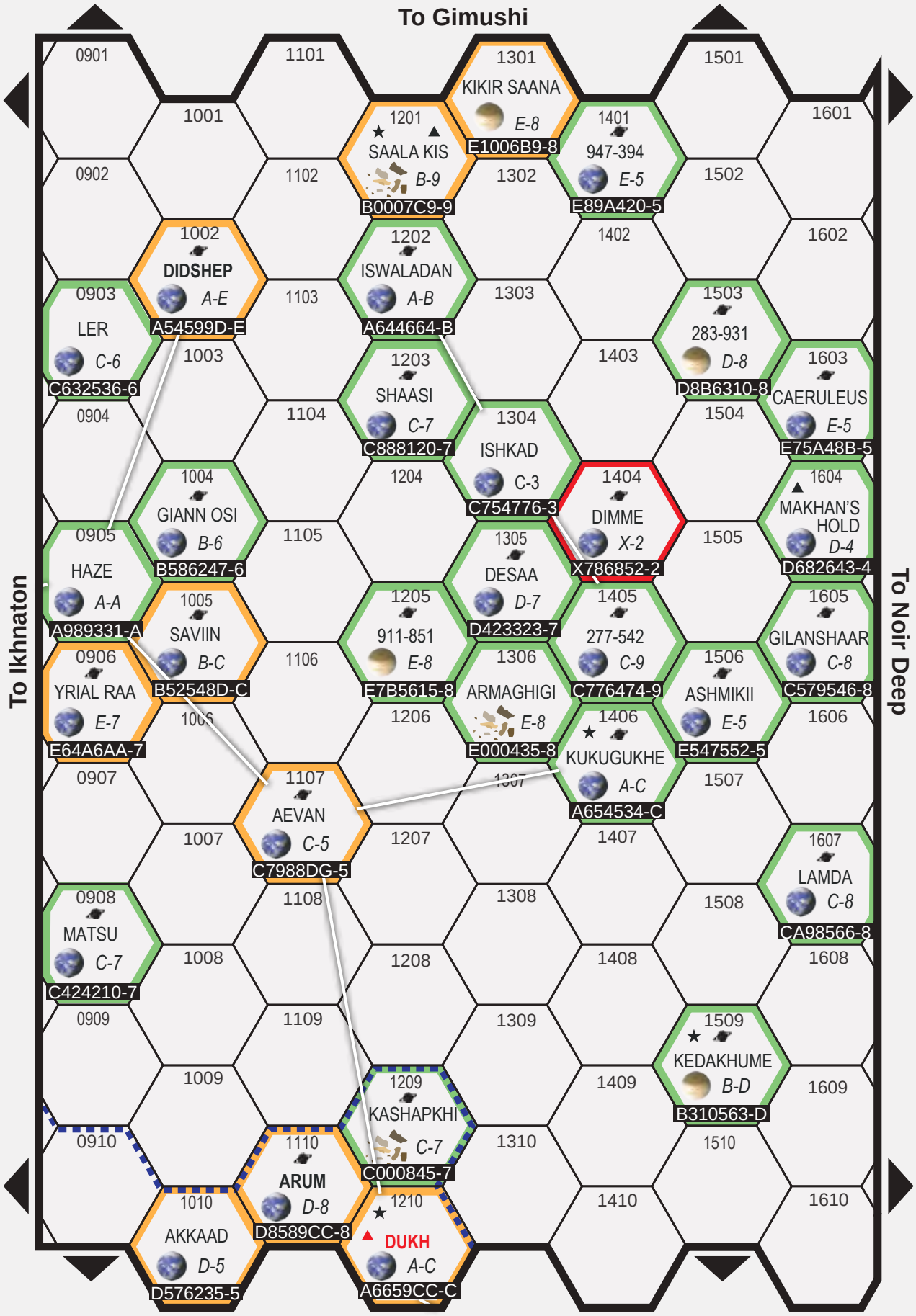
Military actions tend to be small and precise, favouring commando units and strike teams rather than major warfighting formations. Piracy and commerce raiding is all but suicidal for those without connections but there are opportunities for those who affiliate themselves with one of the big players. The same applies to traders and entrepreneurs; the megacorps have the major markets sewn up but make use of 'little fish' here and there. As elsewhere in the Imperium, commercial success goes to those who can develop the right political contacts and political success is the province of those with money. Everyone else competes for the scraps along the fringes – but those scraps can be very large by the standards of the typical small-ship operator.

NIGHTMARE SUBSECTOR

Nightmare borders Empty Quarter sector to coreward. Despite its name, the spinward side of Empty Quarter has an average stellar density. It is a developed region and whilst most interstellar trade comes into Nightmare by way of the Gateway Main there are better links to Empty Quarter from the main grouping of worlds in Nightmare than to trailing or rimward.

Most of the 31 star systems of Nightmare are part of the Riftsedge Cluster, which has a significant internal economy. Most shipping into the cluster comes by way of the Gateway Main and a jump-2 transit between Giann Osi and either 911-851 or Shaasi. Plans to improve the starport at Shaasi have been mooted at various times but always foundered amid wrangling over some legal detail. In the end, the problem was solved by constructing an independent port at 911-851.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
277-542	1405	—	C776474-9	Ni	—	Imperium	G
283-931	1503	—	D8B6310-8	Fl Lo	—	Imperium	G
911-851	1205	—	E7B5615-8	Fl Ni	—	Imperium	G
947-394	1401	—	E89A420-5	Lt Ni Wa	—	Imperium	G
Aevan	1107	—	C7988DG-5	Lt	A	Imperium	G
Akkaad	1010	—	D576235-5	Lo Lt	A	Luriani	—
Armaghigi	1306	—	E000435-8	As Ni Va	—	Imperium	—
Arum	1110	—	D8589CC-8	Hi	A	Luriani	G
Ashmikii	1506	—	E547552-5	Ag Lt Ni	—	Imperium	G
Caeruleus	1603	—	E75A48B-5	Lt Ni Wa	—	Imperium	G
Desaa	1305	—	D423323-7	Lo Po	—	Imperium	G
Didshep	1002	—	A54599D-E	Hi Ht In	A	Imperium	G
Dimme	1404	—	X786852-2	Ga Lt Ri	R	Imperium	G
Dukh	1210	NW	A6659CC-C	Ga Hi Ht	A	Luriani	—
Giann Osi	1004	—	B586247-6	Lo	—	Imperium	G
Gilanshaar	1605	—	C579546-8	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Haze	0905	—	A989331-A	Lo	—	Imperium	—
Ishkad	1304	—	C754776-3	Ag Lt	—	Imperium	—
Iswaladan	1202	—	A644664-B	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Kashapkhi	1209	—	C000845-7	As Va	—	Luriani	G
Kedakhume	1509	N	B310563-D	Ht Ni	—	Imperium	G
Kikir Saana	1301	—	E1006B9-8	Na Ni Va	A	Imperium	—
Kukugukhe	1406	N	A654534-C	Ag Ht Ni	—	Imperium	G
Lamda	1607	—	CA98566-8	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Ler	0903	—	C632536-6	Ni Po	—	Imperium	—
Makhan's Hold	1604	S	D682643-4	Lt Ni Ri	—	Imperium	—
Matsu	0908	—	C424210-7	Lo	—	Imperium	G
Saala Kis	1201	NS	B0007C9-9	As Va	A	Imperium	—
Saviin	1005	—	B52548D-C	Ht Ni	A	Imperium	G
Shaasi	1203	—	C888120-7	Lo	—	Imperium	G
Yrial Raa	0906	—	E64A6AA-7	Ni Wa	A	Imperium	G



NIGHTMARE SUBSECTOR

The world's own port is hardly worthy of the name but Theralia Orbital is equivalent to a Class B highport with no associated groundside facility.

The sector capital, Dukh, is located on the rimward edge of Nightmare. With the surrounding five star systems, Dukh is part of the Luriani Cultural Association and is rather isolated from the rest of the subsector. The highest jump range likely to be viable aboard a commercial ship is two parsecs, making it necessary to undertake a laborious transit to reach Dukh from the Riftsedge Cluster. Few operators consider it worth the trouble but there are regular if infrequent services between Dukh and Kukugukhe.

Responsibility for securing the subsector rests with the 52nd Fleet, which has its headquarters at Kukugukhe. Elements of the fleet are based at Saala Kis to protect shipping in the area, with a small force at Dukh. The subsector admiral faces a difficult political decision regarding this deployment. Dukh does not need a subsector fleet deployment to provide security as it has its own entirely adequate forces, and elements of the sector fleet are based there. Nor do the surrounding systems require a great deal of protection. On the other hand, the 52nd Fleet is required to maintain a presence and the navy does not want the sector duke or visiting dignitaries to see old ships crewed by second-rate personnel. Therefore, Dukh Naval Base receives the newest vessels and the most politically savvy commanders whilst the rest of the fleet does its best with what is left over.

The 52nd Fleet is also responsible for the handful of Imperial worlds in Noir Deep. Forces deployed to this subsector are based out of Kedakhume. The base there was originally built as a sector fleet installation capable of supporting squadrons of battleships. Much of it is mothballed, with the small contingent of destroyers and corvettes operating out of a secondary docking area.

911-851

911-851 is a low-value world in a strategically important system. Offering a jump-2 link between the Gateway Main and the Riftsedge Cluster, the star system is officially listed as having a Class E starport since this is the facility associated with the mainworld. 911-851 is not somewhere anyone would choose to visit; a corrosive hell-hole valuable mainly for the materials extracted from its atmosphere and seas. There is no permanent population as such but around six million workers and their dependents are resident at any given time. Governmental services are provided by Varst Chemicals LIC, which owns most facilities and allows others to operate on a lease basis.

911-851

UWP	E7B5615–8	
Starport	E	Frontier Installation
Size	7	11,200km
Atmosphere	B	Corrosive
Hydrosphere	5	50%
Population	6	Millions
Government Type	1	Company/Corporation
Law Level	5	Personal concealable weapons prohibited
Technology Level	8	Quality Computers

Extraction of useful chemicals is typically accomplished by processing liquids drawn in from the seas, at large static plants. A few facilities specialise in extraction of gases from the atmosphere or solids from the planetary crust. The latter requires quarrying of great masses of rock in a promising area and transportation to a processing facility. It has proven easier to make the facilities mobile, mostly as great crawlers but in a few cases grav mobility is used. Most facilities have their own port, equivalent to a Class E starport with better bulk loading capabilities. The mobile extraction rigs are served by small shuttles or enterprising starship operators, whilst the larger facilities typically have a dedicated bulk shuttle with machinery to transfer a cargo to a ship in orbit. Whilst entrepreneurs might be willing to risk their ship in a corrosive atmosphere for a good profit, those with vessels large enough to ship materials in bulk are not usually willing to do so.

Normally, starport construction is the concern of the mainworld government and given the location of 911-851 a decent quality port could make a great deal of profit. However, Varst Chemicals has little interest in making the investment. The problem was solved around 40 years ago when a consortium of businesses was granted permission to construct a facility in orbit around the system's innermost gas giant. Construction proceeded more slowly than intended but today Theralia Highport provides a jump-2 link out to the Gateway Main. Considerable volumes of traffic pass through, completely ignoring the mainworld. Meanwhile Varst Chemicals continues to operate the mainworld as a corporate holding. It is unlikely this situation will ever change; 911-851 does not even merit a name let alone a major starport.

KUKUGUKHE

The unofficial capital of the Riftsedge Cluster, Kukugukhe is a major exporter of foodstuffs despite its thin atmosphere and dryish conditions. Farming is somewhat technology-intensive but this is not a problem for the planet's TL12 citizens. The planetary population, numbering around 800,000, are mostly scattered across the globe in communities of between 1,000 and 10,000, each with numerous outlying farmsteads. Government is by the Agriguild, once a collective bargaining organisation designed to serve the farmers' needs, now a complete governmental apparatus.

Citizens are fairly content with their government, which is not particularly intrusive. The Agriguild is inflexible, and accepts no input on many subjects, but its rules only affect certain aspects of life. Most of the world's laws and regulations have become a traditional part of society and are accepted without thinking by the populace. Indeed, no citizen would even consider defying the price-fixing edicts or standard reimbursement clauses in their work contracts.

In addition to foodstuffs, Kukugukhe exports small quantities of extremely high-quality agricultural machinery and farming robots through its Class A starport, which is something of a commercial centre for the surrounding systems. Most larger cargo vessels entering the cluster head straight for Kukugukhe, bypassing the lesser markets along the way. A great variety of goods can be found for sale at Kukugukhe's highport, much of it bought up by small-ship operators serving the rest of the cluster. The port also does a steady trade in refits for these small merchant ships.

A number of successful firms are based out of Kukugukhe, which offers home office facilities and tax breaks to investors. Most notable of these firms is Universal Factoring LIC, which specialises in facilitating the business dealings of others. Universal actually owns nothing other than offices at important trade ports, yet makes a fortune out of trading on behalf of others. In the 990s, it barely survived an investigation by the Ministry of Justice regarding some irregularities in its dealings but has since rebuilt its reputation and holdings.

KUKUGUKHE		
UWP	A654534–C	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	6	9,600km
Atmosphere	5	Thin
Hydrosphere	4	40%
Population	5	Hundreds of thousands
Government Type	3	Self-Perpetuating Oligarchy
Law Level	4	Light assault weapons prohibited
Technology Level	C	Average Imperial

REFUELLING FACILITIES

In some cases, the starport listing for a system apparently does not make sense. A world lying on a main or major trade route, with no useful starport, is an impediment to trade which would have immense effects on the local economy. This might reflect a recent disaster which will cause temporary mayhem but economic realities would not permit a break in the trade lanes for any length of time – and such a break might make the economic status of some worlds in the region nonsensical.

The answer is that the system UWP indicates the starport of the mainworld, which might be rather primitive. However, it is not uncommon for outside agencies to create some kind of refuelling facility or even a full port elsewhere in the system. Typically this is in orbit around a gas giant, enabling fuel to be skimmed by craft operating out of the port. Vessels coming to the port for refuelling will usually conduct some trade or buy services, generating an income for the port's operators. Alternatively, tankers may be positioned in a strategic system to provide fuel and little more in the way of services. This enables a jump-1 trade route to get through a system with a desert mainworld, Class E starport and no gas giant.

Both of these setups can be the death knell for a planetary economy. Trade ships will bypass the mainworld and its economy will stagnate. A deal may be negotiated whereby the port operators pay a fee for the right to place their installation in the mainworld's system. This is usually the case in the Imperium, where the economies of worlds are protected by various laws which also regulate the wider pan-Imperial economy. Beyond the Imperium it is more a matter of capability. If a mainworld has the ability to harass traffic using a port in its system, it can usually negotiate a fee. If not, there is nothing that can be done and the world will likely become a backwater.

NOIR DEEP SUBSECTOR

Noir Deep contains seven star systems, all located along its spinward edge. These systems are Imperial territory but there is no assigned subsector fleet. Instead, vessels of the 52nd Fleet provide security patrols and elements of the sector fleet occasionally pass through on the way to Zagrathian subsector. The vast majority of the subsector's population is concentrated on the world of Damzi which, despite its immense population base, remains economically and politically insignificant.

Noir Deep is not really on the way to anywhere and as such sees virtually no through traffic. A few trade ships venture out to the very edge of the Imperium but, overall, the subsector is very much a place where nothing changes and little happens. The only incident of note in recent years was caused by increased interest in rift exploration. A handful of expeditions went out from the trailing worlds, operating from temporary bases which have now mostly been dismantled. No great discoveries were made, at least according to the public databases.

DAMZI

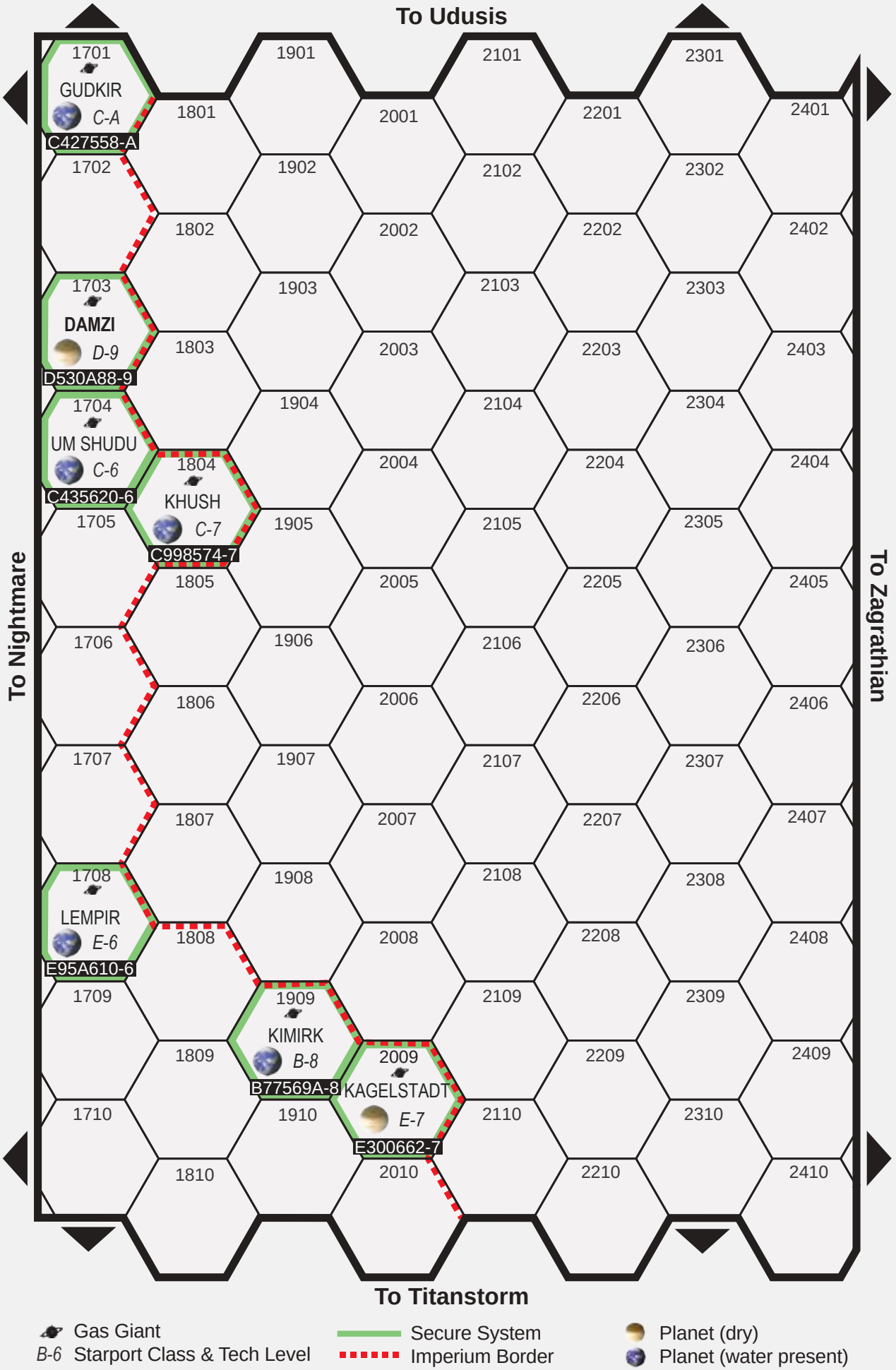
Damzi is an old colony that never stood a chance. Damzi is a desert world with a very thin atmosphere, home to around 90 billion people. Its cities are located atop natural aquifers which are the only source of water. Virtually the entire world's industrial production is used for subsistence, such as building machinery to serve the vast irrigation networks required to grow any sort of crops. The local diet is almost entirely vegetarian due to the lack of animal species capable of surviving in these conditions. Exports are minimal, meaning there is no money for investment or to buy offworld goods. As a result, Damzi is of little importance and merchant

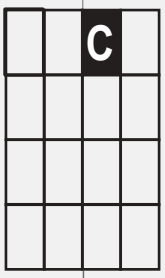
captains expecting to find a vast market for consumer goods are always disappointed.

Outsiders often ask why anyone would travel all the way from Sol to colonise such a difficult world. The simple answer is they did not intend to. Breaking off from a convoy of Rule of Man era colony ships, the mission that settled this world did so out of desperation. With their ship suffering serious malfunctions and nothing but open rift ahead, the colonists chose a likely system and made one last jump. Their intended destination is not known but they were unfortunate enough to misjump into a system with a marginal world. With their jump drive beyond repair the colonists landed on what is now Damzi and tried to make the best of it.

They did very well considering their circumstances. This was a double-edged sword; an expanding population absorbed resources that could have been used to create industry and make a better quality of life. Instead, the

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Damzi	1703	—	D530A88-9	De Hi Po	—	Imperium	G
Gudkir	1701	—	C427558-A	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Kagelstadt	2009	—	E300662-7	Ni Va	—	Imperium	G
Khush	1804	—	C998574-7	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Kimirk	1909	—	B77569A-8	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Lempir	1708	—	E95A610-6	Ni Wa	—	Imperium	G
Um Shudu	1704	—	C435620-6	Ni	—	Imperium	G





LEY

NOIR DEEP SUBSECTOR

population expanded to fill the available accommodation as soon as it was ready, with ever greater efforts required to produce enough food to support the population. The colony ship was still spaceworthy despite it no longer being able to achieve jump, and alongwith subordinate craft was used to transport contingents to different parts of the planet. Wherever conditions were good enough, a settlement was built.

Spreading out like this might seem counter-intuitive but it indicates the mindset of the colonists. They accepted their position was precarious and chose not to put all their eggs in a single basket. In short, they set out to survive in the long term despite anything their unwelcoming new home might throw at them. This decision was probably wise since some settlements did meet with disaster. The colony ship finally broke down whilst evacuating personnel from one of the failed cities, leading to great loss of life, and since then the cities have endured as best they can.

Quality of life on Damzi is not bad. The world has a modest TL9 industrial base, with reasonable medical service and comforts in the form of labour-saving appliances. Indeed, this is the main reason for economic and industrial stagnation; the need to support such a large population at an acceptable level absorbs every scrap of effort. There are those who are pushing for an austerity campaign, accepting a lower standard of living for a generation in order to build an economy capable of breaking the cycle. This is a non-starter, ever since its initial advocates were discovered to be spending government money on their own lifestyles whilst calling for the general population to go without.

It seems likely that Damzi will continue in the same manner until its resources are completely overstretched. This may have already happened. Some cities are struggling to maintain their infrastructure, notably water recycling and waste management. If this is true, there are grim times ahead for the people of Damzi. Ling Standard Products have offered an assistance package but it came with too many strings attached to be palatable at the time. That may change once the cities start breaking down.

DEAD-END COLONIES

Most colonisation of the Trailing Frontier took place at the very end of the Ramshackle Empire era or the beginning of the Long Night. Records from this time are patchy and of course those that have survived show only where the colony missions were intended to go. Many ended up somewhere else or were lost either en route or after settlement. There was little chance of mutual assistance during the period after settlement; most colony ships were worn out or used for in-system operations. As a result, the fate of many colony missions remains unknown.

DAMZI

UWP	D530A88–9	
Starport	D	Poor
Size	5	8,000km
Atmosphere	3	Very thin
Hydrosphere	0	Desert World
Population	A	Tens of billions
Government Type	8	Civil Service Bureaucracy
Law Level	8	Long bladed weapons controlled; open possession prohibited
Technology Level	9	Anti-Gravity

It is possible to puzzle out what happened to some from fragments of information found along their route. Old records may show a colony ship passing through an inhabited system and trading information gained along the way for assistance. Some colony ships travelled around Gateway for a while, stopping at established settlements and either joining or trading with them. The newcomers tried to take over and fought with those already in place, or were ambushed and robbed of their equipment. Later follow-on missions further muddied the waters. Colonies that did well sometimes began exploring the local region and even setting up additional outposts or resource extraction programmes.

Those colonies that did well are, for the most part, the basis of the modern human states in Gateway. Evidence of others turns up from time-to-time, usually in the form of ruins or starship wrecks. Not all of these are on habitable worlds; sometimes a colony ship began to fail and was hurriedly turned into a living-place on the nearest rockball. The only hope for these emergency settlements was for another ship to come along and accept the population. This rarely happened and without outside assistance these communities died out long ago. Others made it to borderline worlds and struggled to survive there. Of these, few communities still exist. The majority were absorbed into more successful states – usually with gratitude – and a handful continue to struggle along in the modern era.

ZAGRATHIAN SUBSECTOR

Zagrathian lies entirely outside the Imperial border, although some of its governments are Imperial client states. There is no internal economy to speak of and virtually no interstellar trade. A jump-4 transit of the whole subsector is possible but this does require going by way of Khaanlisha in Osiris Deep. Imperial navy vessels visiting these worlds almost always travel with tanker support, which has occasionally been extended to civilian ships taking part in a special project sanctioned by the sector administration.

For the most part Zagrathian is irrelevant but its worlds live close enough to Imperial space to be used as a base by a foreign power. Leaving areas like the coreward end of Ley lightly defended frees up ships for deployment elsewhere but this is only possible if regular intelligence gathering takes place. The cheapest way to do this is to subsidise a few civilian ships to operate in the area, feeding reports to an intelligence office at Dafoe.

Zagrathian can be considered to consist of two groupings of worlds. The four systems at the rimward end are reachable by a jump-3 vessel out of Dafoe, whilst the four at the coreward end are more isolated but can be connected by a jump-3 ship. This area of operations also includes Tapendra in neighbouring Yashodhra subsector. Imperial presence in this area is very limited, as the navy is more interested in Darksky to trailing.

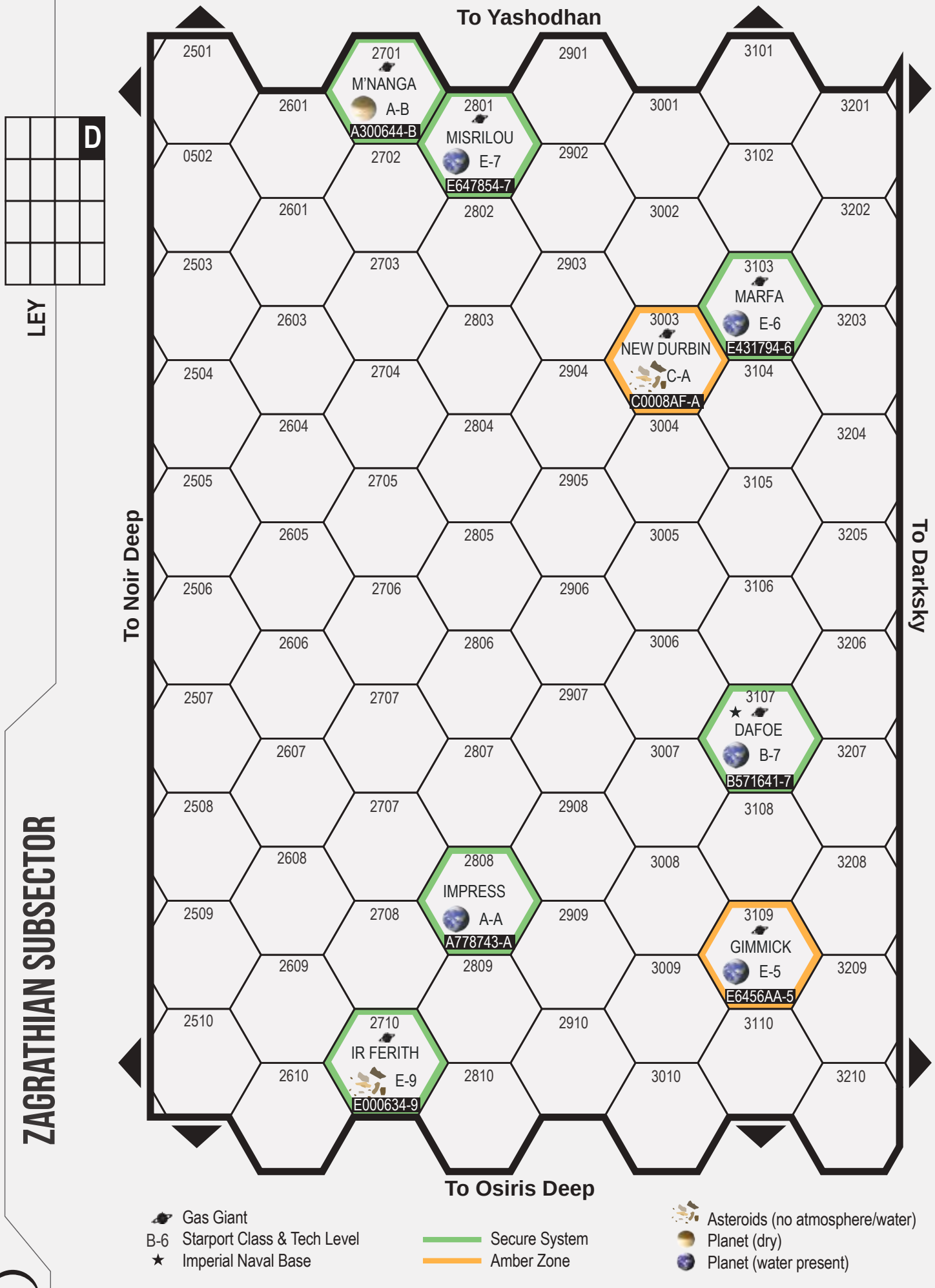
DAFOE

Dafoe appears, at first glance, to be a reasonable prospect for colonisation. It has little surface water but extensive – and very hardy – vegetation. Most plant species are similar to cacti and other desert flora, growing in thick, impenetrable beds which preserve a little moisture in the soil beneath. These have proven a real problem on Dafoe, as they grow quickly but have virtually no nutritional value. They impede movement and are difficult to remove, and to cap it all they reproduce using spores which are toxic to humans. Breathing Dafoe's atmosphere without a filter risks spore growth in the respiratory tract, leading to breathing difficulties and sometimes death.

Unsurprisingly perhaps, the human population of Dafoe is small and clustered in a ring of towns around a single small city. Economically insignificant, Dafoe derives most of its income from its naval base. This is an expansion of the highport built specifically to house a few vessels of the Ley Sector Fleet. Standing deployment is a few couriers and a token escort or two plus a tanker or supply ship but there is usually at least one jump-5 capable cruiser in the region. This vessel is rarely in port but instead makes long sweeps to coreward by way of New Durbin or trailingward through Isolation. The primary concern of the local commander is the K'Kree client state to coreward of the Hochiken People's Assembly.

The Imperial Navy pays over the odds to be able to stage ships out of Dafoe, a generally satisfactory arrangement for all parties. Money spent keeping a cruiser out in Zagrathian is vastly offset by the savings permitted by not having to heavily garrison the coreward end of Ley. Monitoring the 'safe' frontier of Ley may be a boring deployment much of the time but there is still the potential for excitement. The worlds of this subsector receive so little traffic that

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Dafoe	3107	N	B571641-7	He Ni	—	Imperium	G
Gimmick	3109	—	E6456AA-5	Ag Lt Ni	A	Imperium	G
Impress	2808	—	A778743-A	Ag	—	Imperium	—
Ir Ferith	2710	—	E000634-9	As Ni Va	—	—	G
Marfa	3103	—	E431794-6	Po	—	Imperium	G
Misrilou	2801	—	E647854-7	—	—	Imperium	G
M'nanga	2701	—	A300644-B	Ni Va	—	—	G
New Durbin	3003	—	C0008AF-A	As Va	A	Imperium	G



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ZAGRATHIAN SUBSECTOR

DAFOE

UWP	B571641–7	
Starport	B	Good
Size	5	8,000km
Atmosphere	7	Standard; Tainted
Hydrosphere	1	10%
Population	6	Millions
Government Type	4	Representative Democracy
Law Level	1	Body pistols, explosives, and poison gas prohibited
Technology Level	7	Miniaturised Electronics

an Imperial Navy cruiser might be the only source of assistance in a crisis. This, and the money spent by crewmembers on liberty, makes the navy welcome in most of the subsector.

RIFT EXPLORATION MISSIONS

Areas of rift are not entirely empty. They have no main-sequence or giant stars which means the presence of any sort of inhabited body is highly unlikely. However, rifts may contain comets, rogue planets, unusual phenomena and even brown dwarf sub-stellar objects which may have moons. The feeble energy emitted by such bodies makes them difficult to detect at any distance but can be sufficient to make conditions tolerable for extremely primitive life. Anything more advanced than lichen found on such a body is almost certainly imported, which may raise some questions.

Strategically, rifts provide a clear and usually safe border, which can lead to the development of blind spots. An enemy could – at least in theory – cross an area of rift using pre-positioned refuelling points or tankers to make a strike into a weakly defended area. In practice, this is only feasible as a small-force raid but there is a real possibility for damage. It is virtually impossible to detect preparations for such an attack, as the chances of stumbling on the vessels involved is infinitesimally small given the volume of space that would have to be searched. Likewise, chancing on a suitable refuelling spot such as a cache or deep-space icy comet is incredibly unlikely.

However, by monitoring known refuelling points such as comets or the systems deep within a rift it is possible to be reasonably sure no-one is sneaking across. For this reason, the authorities are keen to ensure rift space is properly charted. Official expeditions are occasionally mounted but private exploration companies make up the majority of the effort made to chart deep-space rocks and comets. Occasionally something truly amazing is discovered but for the most part rift exploration is a matter of meticulously analysing long-range sensor data and plotting a jump to what turns out to be an unremarkable deep-space rock.

SPEARHEAD SUBSECTOR

The worlds of Spearhead lie mainly on the Great Ley Cluster or a rimward spur of the Reaching Arm which terminates at Es Al Insi and Weston. Daramm, at the centre of the cluster, is the Luriani homeworld and capital of the Luriani Cultural Association. It also serves as a secondary capital for the sector. More of the sector duke's business is conducted at Daramm through proxies than actually comes to Dukh, largely as a result of astrographic realities. Imperiallines maintains a regular liner, freighter and VIP transport link between the two worlds. The lack of high-quality ports on a jump-2 or even jump-3 route prompted the decision to set up a jump-4 direct route. This is expensive but gives those who can afford it a significant advantage over those who have to transit two parsecs at a time through the backwaters.

Security for the subsector is the responsibility of the 124th Fleet, which has its headquarters at Daramm although most of its assets are based at Mur Mura and Qaarz. The reasons for this are political rather than strategic; such is the importance of Daramm that the subsector admiral has to be there. This makes the upper echelons of subsector naval command available to the archduke's proxies, who tend to have a lot of requests for action. The subsector fleet's command squadron is based at Daramm but most of its destroyers and escorts operate from the other bases. Elements of the sector fleet are usually also present at Daramm, typically a single BatRon or two CruRons, although this can vary. Daramm's shipyards produce most of the sector fleet's capital ships, so at any given time there may be vessels undergoing trials in the outsystem or half-built on the ways.

ASHMAZE

Ashmaze is a mid-tech world on the rimward spur of the Reaching Arm. This part of the main does not receive much in the way of through traffic compared to the worlds of the Great Ley Cluster and there is not all that much to recommend Ashmaze itself. An average-sized world with a thin but breathable atmosphere, the surface is mostly covered by wide oceans which are both deep and very cold. The world itself is something of an iceball with little animal life outside of the seas. What life there is, is hardy indeed.

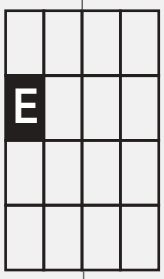
The most important sites in the system, including the starport, are not located on the mainworld. Ashmaze is orbited by two small satellites, Isek and Teill. Isek is the site of the world's small starport, owned and operated by Sharurshid. The port is not extensive but has a large startown used as an R&R facility by Sharurshid vessels in the region. Personnel not working for Sharurshid can use the facilities but employees receive preference and discounted rates. Most vessels passing through the system simply call at the port and never visit the planet. The other moon has a small mining installation but it is otherwise uninhabited.

The dwarf planet Ekamga, located on the fringe of the innermost planetoid belt, is home to a scout base. In addition to the usual information processing and chart-updating work done at all such installations, Ekamga Base is also an x-boat maintenance facility. Boats are routinely rotated through the base after a few months in service, rarely going back to the same route. The base's datanet site posts a list of the most well-travelled x-boats and those farthest from their point of origin. This data is surprisingly popular, with virtual x-boat spotters on many worlds receiving updates by way of the very boats the base exists to serve.

Ashmaze itself is home to a small permanent population, numbering some 6,000 or so. The majority of these are hunters and trappers who wander the planet's wilderness for months at a time before returning to the one permanent settlement on the entire planet. There, they sell their catch to offworld traders. The settlement has a small spaceport equivalent to a Class D installation. The locals have a basic TL7 economy but their rugged lifestyle leaves them little time nor inclination towards the possession of consumer goods.

Elsewhere on the planet, small prospecting outfits (private and corporate) are searching for mineral and hydrocarbon deposits. These workers, numbering about 1,000, are transient and not counted as part of the planetary population. Visitors to Ashmaze are advised to obtain the services of a local trapper if they venture afield; the local wildlife can be dangerous. Similarly, the locals do not like offworlders killing fauna at random since this affects their livelihood.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
119-404	0118	—	BA9A377-A	Lo	—	Imperium	G
409-704	0817	—	A89A698-D	Ht Ni Wa	—	Luriani	G
Ahadi	0515	—	E536884-6	—	—	Luriani	G
Alef	0820	—	X672978-5	Hi In Lt	R	Imperium	—
Arsim	0616	—	B000323-D	As Ht Lo Va	—	Imperium	G
Ashmaze	0417	S	C759320-8	Lo	—	Imperium	G
Conway	0717	—	B687553-7	Ag Ga Ni	—	Imperium	G
Daramm	0812	NW	A76AA76-E	Hi Ht Wa	—	Luriani	—
Es Aal Insi	0219	—	E573432-7	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Eshuun	0413	—	C999516-8	Ni	—	Luriani	G
Gishuumka	0311	—	B4357A8-9	—	—	Luriani	—
Guill En	0217	—	E573659-5	Lt Ni	—	Imperium	G
Huagamm	0813	—	B310889-C	Ht Na	—	Luriani	G
Ikstraat	0119	—	C5448A6-5	Lt	—	Imperium	—
Integrity	0714	—	D589415-4	Ni	—	Luriani	G
Ir	0114	—	C686769-6	Ag Ga Ri	—	Imperium	—
Ithukar	0318	—	B5438BF-A	Po	A	Imperium	G
Kaan	0418	—	A542221-A	He Lo Po	—	Imperium	G
Kaapelli	0213	—	C000642-9	As Ni Va	—	Luriani	G
Kalu Marasiin	0111	—	AA7A526-A	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Kerin's Tyr	0620	—	B575778-6	Ag	—	Imperium	—
Kidush	0713	—	D410759-8	—	—	Luriani	G
Leshuil	0514	—	D88A140-4	Lo Wa	—	Luriani	G
Luria	0316	—	C522442-7	He Ni Po	—	Luriani	G
Luur	0811	—	C56478D-7	Ag Ri	A	Luriani	—
Mamdinga	0519	—	D878558-7	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Mastiraak	0513	—	D564200-7	Lo	—	Luriani	G
Miip	0819	—	E999542-5	Ni Lt	A	Imperium	—
Mur Mura	0614	N	B88A303-9	Lo Wa	—	Luriani	G
Naasirka Ual	0113	—	B754656-A	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	—
Prouse	0411	—	C000568-A	As Ni Va	—	Luriani	G
Puluke	0517	—	B545440-B	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Qaarz	0414	N	A652610-B	Ni Po	—	Luriani	G
Re	0715	—	C682314-4	Lo Lt	—	Luriani	G
Rurur	0214	—	B5609BA-B	De Hi	A	Luriani	G
Shirshagi	0815	—	B885972-C	Ga Hi Ht	—	Luriani	G
Shore	0315	—	A545614-A	Ag Ni	—	Luriani	G
Stalwart	0512	—	B433541-B	Ni Po	—	Luriani	G
Tender Mercy	0314	—	E547210-6	Lo	—	Luriani	—
Tile	0313	—	C7C39BD-B	Fl Hi In	A	Luriani	G
Tling	0518	—	D6669B7-3	Ga Hi Lt	—	Imperium	—
Weston	0618	—	B778878-5	Lt	A	Imperium	G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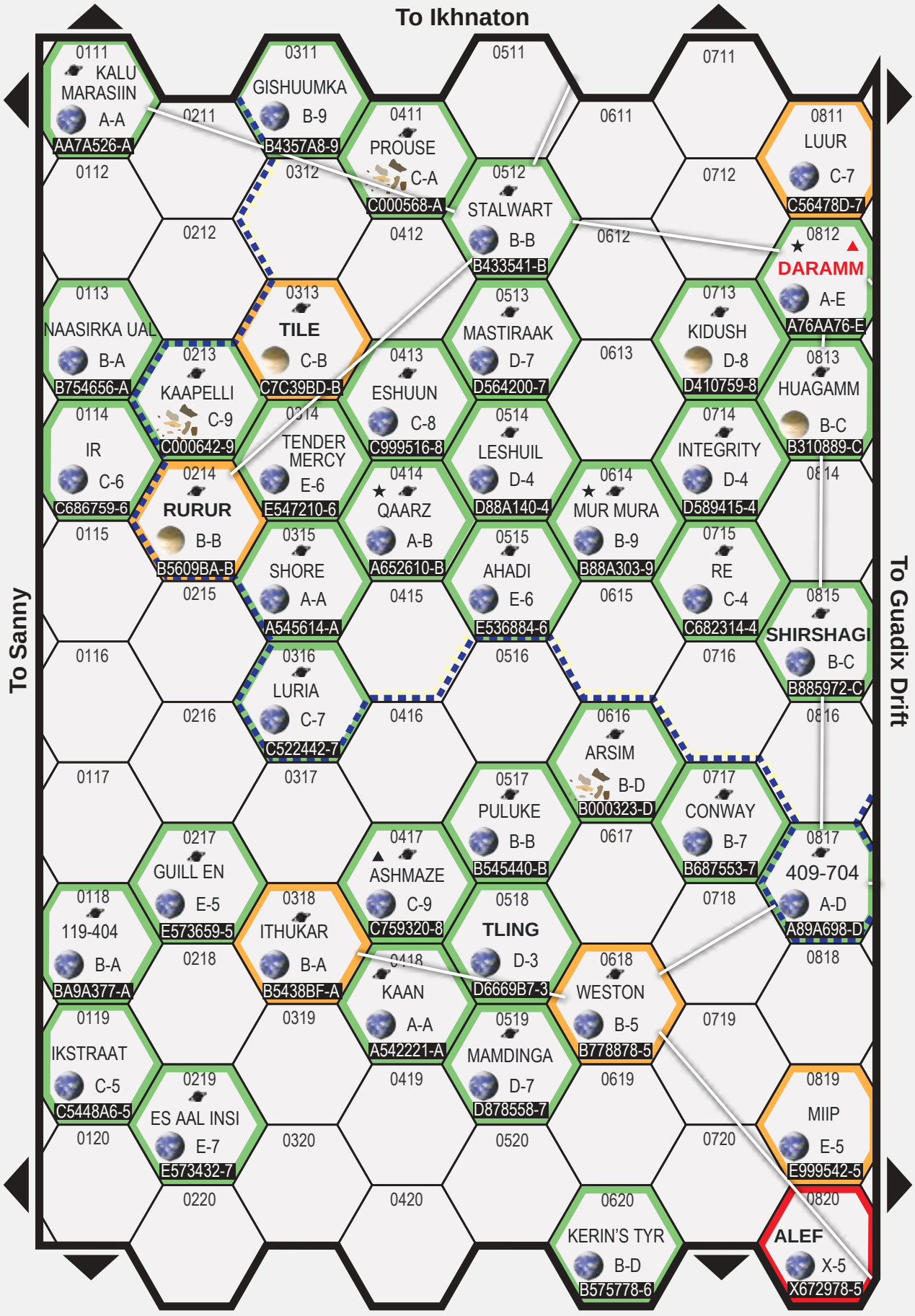
To Ikhnaton
To Sanny
To Guadix Drift
To Highlord
0111
KALU MARASIIN
A-A
AA7A526-A
0311
GISHUUMKA
B-9
B4357A8-9
0511
0711
0411
PROUSE
C-A
C000568-A
0811
LUUR
C-7
C56478D-7
0211
0611
0112
0312
0512
STALWART
B-B
B433541-B
0712
0212
0412
0612
0812
DARAMM
A-E
A76AA76-E
0113
NAASIRKA UAL
B-A
B754656-A
0313
TILE
C-B
C7C39BD-B
0513
MASTIRAAK
D-7
D564200-7
0713
KIDUSH
D-8
D410759-8
0213
KAAPELLI
C-9
C000642-9
0413
ESHUUN
C-8
C999516-8
0613
0813
HUAGAMM
B-C
B310889-C
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IR
C-6
C686759-6
0314
TENDER MERCY
E-6
E547210-6
0514
LESHUIL
D-4
D88A140-4
0714
INTEGRITY
D-4
D589415-4
0214
RURUR
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B5609BA-B
0414
QAARZ
A-B
A652610-B
0614
MUR MURA
B-9
B88A303-9
0814
0115
0315
SHORE
A-A
A545614-A
0515
AHADI
E-6
E536884-6
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RE
C-4
C682314-4
0815
SHIRSHAGI
B-C
B885972-C
0215
0415
0615
0116
0316
LURIA
C-7
C522442-7
0516
0716
0216
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0616
ARSIM
B-D
B000323-D
0816
0117
0317
0517
PULUKE
B-B
B545440-B
0717
CONWAY
B-7
B687553-7
0217
GUILL EN
E-5
E573659-5
0417
ASHMAZE
C-9
C759320-8
0617
0817
409-704
A-D
A89A698-D
0118
119-404
B-A
BA9A377-A
0318
ITHUKAR
B-A
B5438BF-A
0518
TLING
D-3
D6669B7-3
0718
0218
0418
KAAN
A-A
A542221-A
0618
WESTON
B-5
B778878-5
0818
0119
IKSTRAAT
C-5
C5448A6-5
0319
0519
MAMDINGA
D-7
D878558-7
0719
0219
ES AAL INSI
E-7
E573432-7
0419
0619
0819
MIIP
E-5
E999542-5
0120
0320
0520
0720
0220
0420
0620
KERIN'S TYR
B-D
B575778-6
0820
ALEF
X-5
X672978-5
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
★ Imperial Naval Base
▲ Imperial Scout Base
▲ Imperial Scout Way Station
Secure System
Amber Zone
Red Zone
X-boat Route
Asteroids (no atmosphere/water)
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)
Luriani Cultural Association Border

ASHMAZE

UWP	C759320–8	
Starport	C	Routine
Size	7	11,200km
Atmosphere	5	Thin
Hydrosphere	9	90%
Population	3	Thousands
Government Type	2	Participating Democracy
Law Level	0	No prohibitions
Technology Level	8	Quality Computers

SPINY-TAILED SEGGE

The spiny-tailed Segge (pronounced 'seg', with a hard g) is a typical example of Ashmaze's ecosystem. Roughly the size of a badger, the Segge has a ridge of spines similar to a porcupine running down its back and covering its tail. These bristle up when the animal feels threatened, accompanied by hissing and tail-lashing that leaves no-one in any doubt they are intruding. Segges are herbivorous but territorial, and will attack creatures larger than themselves to protect their range. They are mostly solitary but a number of females will usually have overlapping territories serviced by the dominant male in the area. Fights between males are common and usually fatal.

The Segge is adept at hunkering down in whatever cover is available, using loose dirt to create partial concealment, and will do so to keep warm for long periods when food is scarce. They store food in scrapes in the ground, which they will defend with a vicious tenacity. The thick fur of the Segge is prized by the luxury-goods markets offworld and by locals for outdoor clothing, bringing trappers into the territories of the Segge where they may encounter these ornery beasts or the creatures that prey upon them.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Spiny-Tailed Segge	8	6m
Skills	Melee (natural) 1, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1	
Attacks	Claws, Teeth, Spines (1D)	
Traits	Camouflaged (-2), Small (-2)	
Behaviour	Herbivore, Gatherer	

WESTON

Weston is an important x-boat link on the route from Daramm to the rimward end of the sector and ultimately to the Domain capital at Annapabar. The world is also important as a jumping-off point to the Shanape Linkworlds and the Shanape Cluster itself. jump-2 ships can reach Miip from Weston but most transit via Kerin's Tyr. The world also sees a lot of Tukera ships transiting out of the Linkworlds after a refit at Sentry.

As befits an important system, Weston is protected by a standing deployment from the 124th fleet, which is assigned to defend the subsector. This deployment is usually a single destroyer or a task force of three or four corvettes and a support vessel. There is also considerable Scout Service traffic in the form of x-boats and tenders serving the communications route and couriers carrying messages to worlds off the main route. A small Scout base exists to support this activity. It is situated on Weston's only moon, Sura.

Weston is a warm, wet world served by a Class B starport. The population of 700 million are ruled by a Planetary Governor. Originally a decisive, forward-thinking individual, more recent governors have been well-entrenched, plodding bureaucrats who have led the world to comfortable stagnation. The populace is subject to strict laws, with enforcement personnel (along with the governmental and mercantile portions) forming an elite segment of the populace that enjoys the benefits of imported technology. Everyone else makes do with Weston's sustainable Tech Level of 5, plus whatever they can afford at inflated prices.

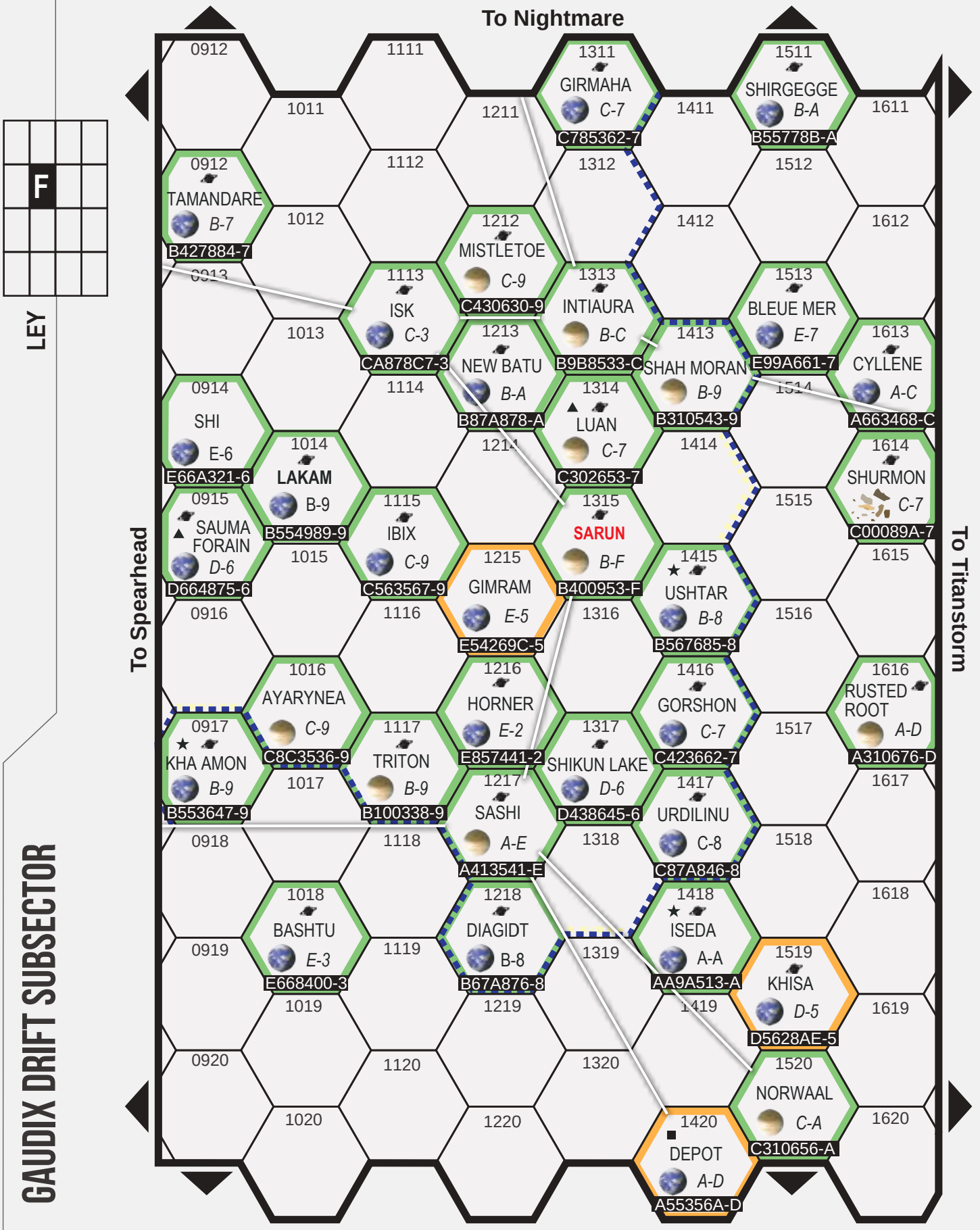
WESTON

UWP	B778878–5	
Starport	B	Good
Size	7	11,200km
Atmosphere	7	Standard; Tainted
Hydrosphere	8	80%
Population	8	Hundreds of millions
Government Type	7	Balkanisation
Law Level	8	Long bladed weapons controlled; open possession prohibited
Technology Level	5	Mass Production

Visitors to Weston are normally awed by the rain, which is almost constant and consists of some of the biggest droplets in Charted Space. An hour of sunshine would be considered a drought on Weston. Once they are used to the rain, visitors normally start to notice how clean, neat and well-ordered the place is, and the gloomy resignation of the bulk of the populace.

Guadix Drift Subsector

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Ayarynea	1016	—	C8C3536-9	Fl Ni	—	Luriani	—
Bashtu	1018	—	E668400-3	Lt Ni	—	Imperium	G
Bleue Mer	1513	—	E99A661-7	Ni Wa	—	Imperium	G
Cyllene	1613	—	A663468-C	Ht Ni	—	Imperium	G
Depot	1420	D	A55356A-D	Ht Ni Po	A	Imperium	—
Diagidt	1218	—	B67A876-8	Wa	—	Luriani	G
Gimram	1215	—	E54269C-5	He Lt Ni Po	A	Luriani	—
Girmaha	1311	—	C785362-7	Lo Ga	—	Luriani	G
Gorshon	1416	—	C423662-7	Ni Po	—	Luriani	G
Horner	1216	—	E857441-2	Ga Ni Lt	—	Luriani	G
Ibix	1115	—	C563567-9	Ni	—	Luriani	G
Intiaura	1313	—	B9B8533-C	Fl Ht Ni	—	Luriani	G
Iseda	1418	N	AA9A513-A	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Isk	1113	—	CA878C7-3	Lt Ri	—	Luriani	G
Kha Amon	0917	N	B553647-9	Ni Po	—	Imperium	G
Khisa	1519	—	D5628AE-5	Lt Ri	A	Imperium	G
Lakam	1014	—	B554989-9	Hi	—	Luriani	G
Luan	1314	S	C302653-7	Ic Ni V	—	Luriani	G
Mistletoe	1212	—	C430630-9	De Ni Po	—	Luriani	—
New Batu	1213	—	B87A878-A	Wa	—	Luriani	G
Norwaal	1520	—	C310656-A	Ni	—	Imperium	—
Rusted Root	1616	—	A310676-D	Ht Ni	—	Imperium	G
Sarun	1315	—	B400953-F	Hi Ht In Va	—	Luriani	G
Sashi	1217	—	A413541-E	Ht Ic Ni	—	Luriani	G
Sauma Forain	0915	S	D664875-6	Ri	—	Luriani	G
Shah Moran	1413	—	B310543-9	Ni	—	Luriani	—
Shi	0914	—	E66A321-6	Lo Wa	—	Luriani	—
Shikun Lake	1317	—	D438645-6	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Shirgegge	1511	—	B55778B-A	Ag	—	Imperium	G
Shurmon	1614	—	C00089A-7	As Va	—	Imperium	G
Tamandare	0912	—	B427884-7	—	—	Luriani	G
Triton	1117	—	B100338-9	Lo Va	—	Luriani	G
Urdilinu	1417	—	C87A846-8	Wa	—	Luriani	G
Ushtar	1415	N	B567685-8	Ag Ni Ri	—	Luriani	G



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GAUDIX DRIFT SUBSECTOR

The Guadix Drift subsector contains 34 star systems, almost all of which are in the Great Ley Cluster or on the Reaching Arm. Most worlds are part of the Luriani Cultural Association, with long histories of trade, cooperation and occasional friction. The worlds around Dukh are rather isolated and underdeveloped, other than the sector capital itself. As a result, relatively little shipping goes coreward but trade in other directions is extensive. Bulk cargo moves mostly aboard lumbering jump-1 freighters, with urgent or high-value items carried aboard smaller and faster ships.

Responsibility for security of the subsector rests with the 129th Fleet, whose headquarters is at Ushtar. Located one jump from the subsector capital, forces from this base operate on the trailing side of the subsector with a little overlap into neighbouring subsectors. The Kha Amon contingent is responsible for the spinward half of the subsector, whilst Iseda is essentially an outpost of the sector fleet headquarters at Depot. It is the final resting place for many old Imperial Navy ships. In theory these are mothballed for future reactivation but by the time a major warship in Ley reaches a state where it is no longer useful it is unlikely to be worth putting back into commission.

Guadix Drift can be considered the heartland of the Ley Sector Commercial Alliance, which has an impressive headquarters on Daramm. Many of the founding members of the LSCA were associates of the former Archduke Nells, who was himself a Luriani. Outsiders have joined the alliance but its spiritual home is in the Luriani Cultural Assembly. There are many who believe the LSCA is deliberately pushing Luriani culture by economic means but its members would say they are simply doing business, and any cultural influence is just a bonus. The proximity of the LSCA headquarters to the secondary sector court at Daramm is certainly beneficial for its members and is obviously not a coincidence.

ISEDA

Iseda lies just outside the Luriani Cultural Association and was never a Luriani-settled world. Attempts were made but the atmospheric taint is stronger in the world's waters. This makes them unpleasant to swim in, especially for Luriani who are normally resistant to such things. The taint comes from various species of aquatic plants and is constantly renewed by huge beds of floating seaweed. This does not mean Iseda is unpopulated, merely that Luriani do not want to settle there. A permanent population of Imperial humans was established in the early 200s and for many years did not expand greatly.

ISEDA

UWP	AA9A513–A	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	A	16,000km
Atmosphere	9	Dense; Tainted
Hydrosphere	A	Water World
Population	5	Hundreds of thousands
Government Type	1	Company/Corporation
Law Level	3	Machine guns, automatic rifles prohibited
Technology Level	A	Interstellar community

In the late 700s, the system was selected as the site for a naval base specialising in the maintenance of reserve vessels. This came with a modest payment from the sector administration every 10 years and was sufficient to finally allow expansion of the world's population and industrial base. A scattering of settlements on the few islands that exist was greatly increased by immigrants seeking work with the newly established Iseda Corporation, which took over governmental responsibilities from the previous autonomous colonies.

Today, the world's entire population is employed by the Iseda Corporation or are dependents of employees. The corporation's official business area is listed as seabed mining, aquaculture and associated aquatic industries. This translates to harvesting the seaweed rafts and processing them for the pharmaceutical industry. Iseda's products are restricted in the Luriani Cultural Association as they can cause skin or respiratory irritation in most Luriani but are exported widely elsewhere.

The naval base is capable of accommodating ships up to cruiser size but rarely hosts anything larger than a destroyer, as the sector's naval depot is just a jump away. It does have a small force of system defence boats, and a couple of monitors for defence, but most of the naval assets in the system are

half-cannibalised or dead at their moorings. These vessels are maintained as well as possible but over the years any that could be put back into service were fixed up and sent elsewhere. More of the ships are gradually being moved to the beyond economic repair section after being stripped of anything that could be used to keep another vessel flying. Iseda Naval Installation is a rather gloomy place, where old ships go to slowly die.

THE ISEDA SUPPLEMENT

According to its marketing materials, the Iseda Supplement is a revolutionary dietary component which can slow ageing, promote healing and aid restful sleep. It is completely banned on Luriani worlds as it causes severe gastric distress, but non-Luriani report various beneficial effects which may or may not be imaginary. A container of 80 pills, to be taken twice a day, costs an incredible Cr100 over the counter. This makes the trade in Isada's seaweed extremely lucrative. Harvesting is difficult, and sometimes hazardous, but it is well-paid and there are some who claim the rafts are the healthiest place in the sector to work (for non-Luriani) due to exposure to raw Iseda. It is not clear how true any of this is but consumers are lining up to pay huge prices for a bottle of pills containing a small amount of pulped seaweed.

SHIRGEGGE

Shirgegge provides a jump-2 link between the Dukh Cluster and coreward tip of the Reaching Arm in Titanstorm subsector, and also allows jump-2 transit into Nightmare. As such it is an important trade link. Its high-quality Class B starport receives a considerable volume of trade and, arguably, its population are better informed about high-level politics than people of most other worlds. This has prompted a number of investment firms to open offices at Shirgegge. Hortalez et Cie dominates the field but there is money to be made by lesser players.

The world of Shirgegge is a fairly typical greenish planet. Its hydrosphere is extensive but the thin atmosphere means that rainfall does not penetrate far inland in most areas. Semi-desert is common in the interior of the continents, with a unique ecosphere which has generally resisted the introduction of foreign species. The 80 million inhabitants dwell in 12 large cities distributed across the globe, with smaller settlements in between.

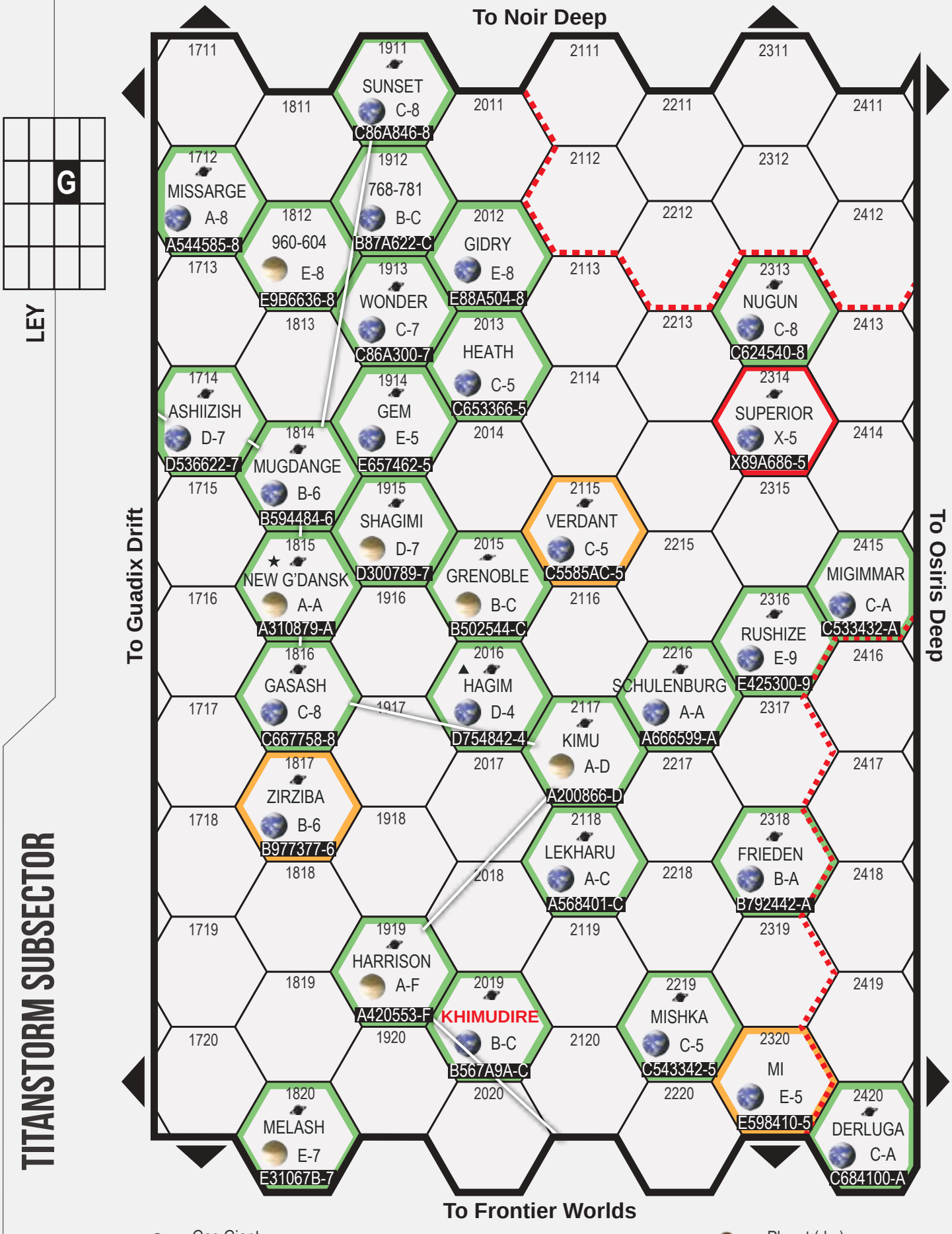
SHIRGEGGE

UWP	B55778B–A	
Starport	B	Good
Size	5	8,000km
Atmosphere	5	Thin
Hydrosphere	7	70%
Population	7	Tens of millions
Government Type	8	Civil Service Bureaucracy
Law Level	B	Rigid control of civilian movement
Technology Level	A	Interstellar community

Life in the cities is pleasant, if subject to strict laws and many civil regulations. Those who work in the outback have a quite different experience, however. Agriculture is hard work even with advanced robotic assistance. Constant effort is required to support the plantations of offworld crops needed to feed the population, since most of the local species are virtually inedible to humans. The world's native flora continually tries to reclaim the fields, to the point where burning or cutting a dead zone around the fields is the only viable solution. Despite this, agricultural yields are good enough that a fair amount of food is exported. A period of neglect as short as 10 years could wreck the economy of any given city. This has only happened once in the world's history but farm managers are constantly reminded about the need to keep the world's invasive species at bay.

TITANSTORM SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
768-781	1912	—	B87A622-C	Ht Ni Wa	—	Imperium	—
960-604	1812	—	E9B6636-8	Fl Ni	—	Imperium	—
Ashiizish	1714	—	D536622-7	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Derluga	2420	—	C684100-A	Lo	—	—	G
Frieden	2318	—	B792442-A	He Ni	—	Imperium	G
Gasash	1816	—	C667758-8	Ag Ga Ri	—	Imperium	G
Gem	1914	—	E657462-5	Ga Ni Lt	—	Imperium	G
Gidry	2012	—	E88A504-8	Ni	—	Imperium	—
Grenoble	2015	—	B502544-C	Ht Ic Ni Va	—	Imperium	G
Hagim	2016	S	D754842-4	Lt	—	Imperium	G
Harrison	1919	—	A420553-F	De He Ht Ni Po	—	Imperium	G
Heath	2013	—	C653366-5	Lo Lt Po	—	Imperium	—
Khimudire	2019	—	B567A9A-C	Hi Ht	—	Imperium	G
Kimu	2117	—	A200866-D	Ht Na Va	—	Imperium	G
Lekharu	2118	—	A568401-C	Ht Ni	—	Imperium	G
Melash	1820	—	E31067B-7	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Mi	2320	—	E598410-5	Lt Ni Pa	A	Imperium	—
Migimmar	2415	—	C533432-A	Ni Po	—	Imperium	—
Mishka	2219	—	C543342-5	Lo Lt Po	—	Imperium	G
Missarge	1712	—	A544585-8	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Mugdange	1814	—	B594484-6	Ni	—	Imperium	G
New G'dansk	1815	N	A310879-A	Na	—	Imperium	G
Nugun	2313	—	C624540-8	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Rushize	2316	—	E425300-9	Lo	—	Imperium	G
Schulenburg	2216	—	A666599-A	Ag Ga Ni	—	Imperium	G
Shagimi	1915	—	D300789-7	Na Va	—	Imperium	G
Sunset	1911	—	C86A846-8	Ri Wa	—	Imperium	G
Superior	2314	—	X89A686-5	Lt Ni Wa	R	Imperium	G
Verdant	2115	—	C5585AC-5	Ag Lt Ni	A	Imperium	G
Wonder	1913	—	C86A300-7	Lo Wa	—	Imperium	G
Zirziba	1817	—	B977377-6	Lo	A	Imperium	G



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TITANSTORM SUBSECTOR

The majority of worlds in Titanstorm lie on the trailing end of the Reaching Arm, which gives access to two chains of worlds known as the Reaching and Broken Fingers. Beyond the fingers lie a scattering of stars out in the Lesser Rift. There is little traffic to coreward and virtually none to trailing, with the vast majority of ships in the region moving along the Reaching Arm. To 'The subsector has only one high population world but is a major consumer of goods. As such it is important to the economy of the sector as a whole.

The subsector is secured by the 191st Fleet, which has headquarters at New G'Dansk. A scout base at Hagim supports internal communications work as well as expeditions into Osiris Deep. Scout ships are more common than naval vessels, other than at the three Imperial worlds in the subsector. Although a frontier in the sense that it lies on the Imperial border, Titanstorm has the general feeling of an internal region. Political interest is directed inwards, with worlds more concerned about their status in the Imperium than events outside it.

FRIEDEN

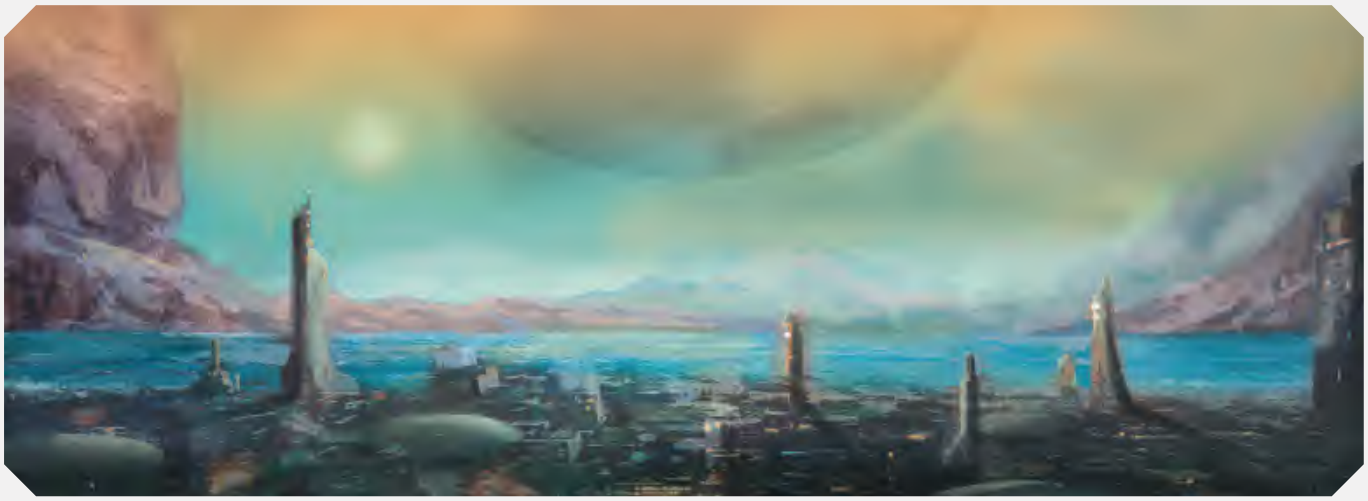
Freiden lies at least two parsecs from any other world, and was never colonised by the Vilani. The first human settlements on-planet were set up by Solomani settlers during the Rule of Man. These settlements grew into an impressive culture during the Twilight but had entirely died out by the establishment of the Third Imperium. A second wave of colonists during the period 300–500 built over and obliterated one of the cities of the old civilisation, although others remain fairly intact.

A mid-sized world with little water and a dense, tainted atmosphere, Frieden is a moon of the gas giant Vellaw. The population of 30,000 is almost entirely housed in a single city near the equator, on the shores of the world's only sea of any size. The locals have a high-technology society and enjoy a good standard of living but laws are strict and vigorously enforced.

FREIDEN

UWP		B792442–A
Starport	B	Good
Size	7	11,200km
Atmosphere	9	Dense; Tainted
Hydrosphere	2	20%
Population	4	Tens of thousands
Government Type	4	Representative Democracy
Law Level	2	Portable energy weapons prohibited
Technology Level	A	Interstellar community

Frieden is host to a number of archaeological teams, most of whom are digging through the wreckage of the original colony trying to discover exactly what happened to the hundreds of millions of inhabitants. The most likely theory is that a gradual loss of technology resulted in an inability to maintain environmental systems. Damage to some of the cities suggests fighting, which in turn implies the collapse was gradual. Perhaps the locals battled it out over the surviving safe areas, or the victor in a long war was so exhausted that civilisation could not be saved even after the fighting was over.



HAGIM

Despite being a link on the wrist of the Reaching Arm, Hagim is not an important world. Relatively little trade comes this far out to trailing and most of the vessels that head out into the fingers are jump-2 or higher ships intended for frontier operations. The scout base offers training for starship crews intending to operate along the Imperial fringes, yet uptake is generally small. Most of those intending to take their ships out over the frontier know what they are doing – or think they do.

Hagim is mid-sized, with a thin atmosphere and limited surface water. Its dim red dwarf primary is unable to warm the world much, so the terrain is mainly arctic desert with little animal life. Despite its unwelcoming aspect, Hagim is home to some 900 million inhabitants, who make their homes in mid-sized towns wherever a sheltered valley or liquid water source is to be found. The locals have a sustainable Tech Level of 4. Most people scratch a bare living by farming and fishing in the world's small, ice-covered seas. Government is by a rather ad-hoc system of representation, although governmental structures are extremely loose.

Hagim is chiefly notable for two factors. First, a surprisingly large number of inhabitants go offworld to work or join the Imperial services. Although the world has little in the way of a permanent starport, recruiting ships from the Marine Corps, the Imperial Army and some megacorporations visit certain towns from time-to-time. The locals are uneducated but that can be remedied. What they bring to their employers is almost infinite resourcefulness and a willingness to work – conditions are so tough on Hagim that some inhabitants who join the Imperial Marine Corps actually have to undertake extra training to maintain their pre-recruitment physical standards.

The second notable feature of Hagim is its rather strange moon system. Despite being a small world, Hagim has seven moons and a ring system. The ring seems to be the remains of another moon and three of the existing ones have been positively confirmed as being fragments of a larger body. All seven moons have extremely exotic orbits, a circumstance that cannot be natural. Astrophysicists predict that two of the outer moons will collide in about 6,000 years' time. This is further evidence that something has disturbed the orbits of the various moons, since these two would have already collided if they had held these orbits for more than 350,000 years. Both moons are a great deal older than that.

HAGIM

UWP	D754842–4	
Starport	D	Poor
Size	7	11,200km
Atmosphere	5	Thin
Hydrosphere	4	40%
Population	8	Hundreds of millions
Government Type	4	Representative Democracy
Law Level	2	Portable energy weapons prohibited
Technology Level	4	External Combustion

RECEIVING SHIPS

The Imperial services and some of the megacorporations use the old naval tradition of receiving ships for new recruits, but with a modern twist. These vessels recruit promising young people and transport them to training or education facilities, beginning their orientation and basic instruction along the way. A recruiting cruise can be many weeks long, with the earliest batch of recruits in a position to assist the crew with their newer colleagues.

Very occasionally a receiving ship will be diverted to assist in some crisis. This can result in a vessel or force gaining personnel who have virtually no training, or a contingent landing in uniforms but with little idea what they are doing. This is in no way desirable but sometimes the nearest assets must be deployed until a more coherent response can be made.

Corporate receiving ships are less likely to be diverted in this manner and in some cases function as commercial vessels. For example, a receiving ship may provide on-the-job training for stewards and technicians whilst transporting goods and passengers. Vessels operated by large corporations generally offer a solid training programme feeding into an advanced course at a proper facility, but some of the smaller lines have a receiving ship which transfers minimally trained crewmembers to other vessels before recruiting more. Standards are generally lower as a result but this method allows a line to do away with permanent facilities and make some money whilst its newest members are undergoing their training.

OSIRIS DEEP SUBSECTOR

Three of the six star systems in Osiris Deep are Imperial members and subject to the protection of the 191st Fleet. Two of the others are client states, with only Mensure fully independent. Jump-2 traffic can reach Magulus, although only a handful of vessels operate this route. Virtually all the trade reaching Magulus and Ssissth comes in by way of the same ships, making a new arrival something of an event.

It is not possible to travel to trailingward from Mensure without deep-space refuelling, even for a jump-6 ship. It is widely believed the Imperial Navy maintains a set of deep-space refuelling posts allowing couriers to reach Splinter and Hollman in Abysm subsector. If true, this creates a relatively quick communications route between the Imperium and the nearest polities of Gateway. This route leads to the sector capital and naval depot, but from there the normal courier system is used to bring news to the Domain capital at Annapabar. This does mean the archduke is behind the curve on events in the HPA and Plavian League compared to his naval commanders, but that gives the admirals a chance to prepare for likely orders if action ever becomes necessary.

KHAANLISHA

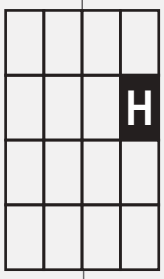
Khaanlisha is as unimportant as a mainworld can be. Lying on the fringe of the Lesser Rift, it is home to around eight million people – at least, officially. The official population occupies a group of large islands off the coast of one of the continents, getting by with a sustainable Tech Level 5. Most of the rest of Khaanlisha is listed as uninhabited. In reality there is a population of Jonkeereen on at least one continent. Their presence is an open secret, although their numbers are unknown. A handful of ship operators have managed to cultivate good enough relations that the Jonkeereen will deal with them. Others are typically ignored or see no indications of a community to trade with.

On one of the moons of the system's innermost gas giant there is a small freeport owned and operated with the permission of the system's government by

KHAANLISHA

UWP	E795643–5	
Starport	E	Frontier Installation
Size	7	11,200km
Atmosphere	9	Dense; Tainted
Hydrosphere	5	50%
Population	6	Millions
Government Type	4	Representative Democracy
Law Level	3	Machine guns, automatic rifles prohibited
Technology Level	5	Mass Production

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Amlir	2515	—	E87A447-5	Lt Ni Wa	A	Imperium	G
Khaanlisha	2513	—	E795643-5	Ag Lt Ni	—	Imperium	G
Magulus	2717	—	C536520-7	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Mensure	3016	—	D6789AA-5	Hi In Lt	A	—	—
Nushanita	2614	—	C537731-8	—	—	Imperium	G
Ssissth	2517	—	A6449DB-B	Hi In	A	Imperium	G



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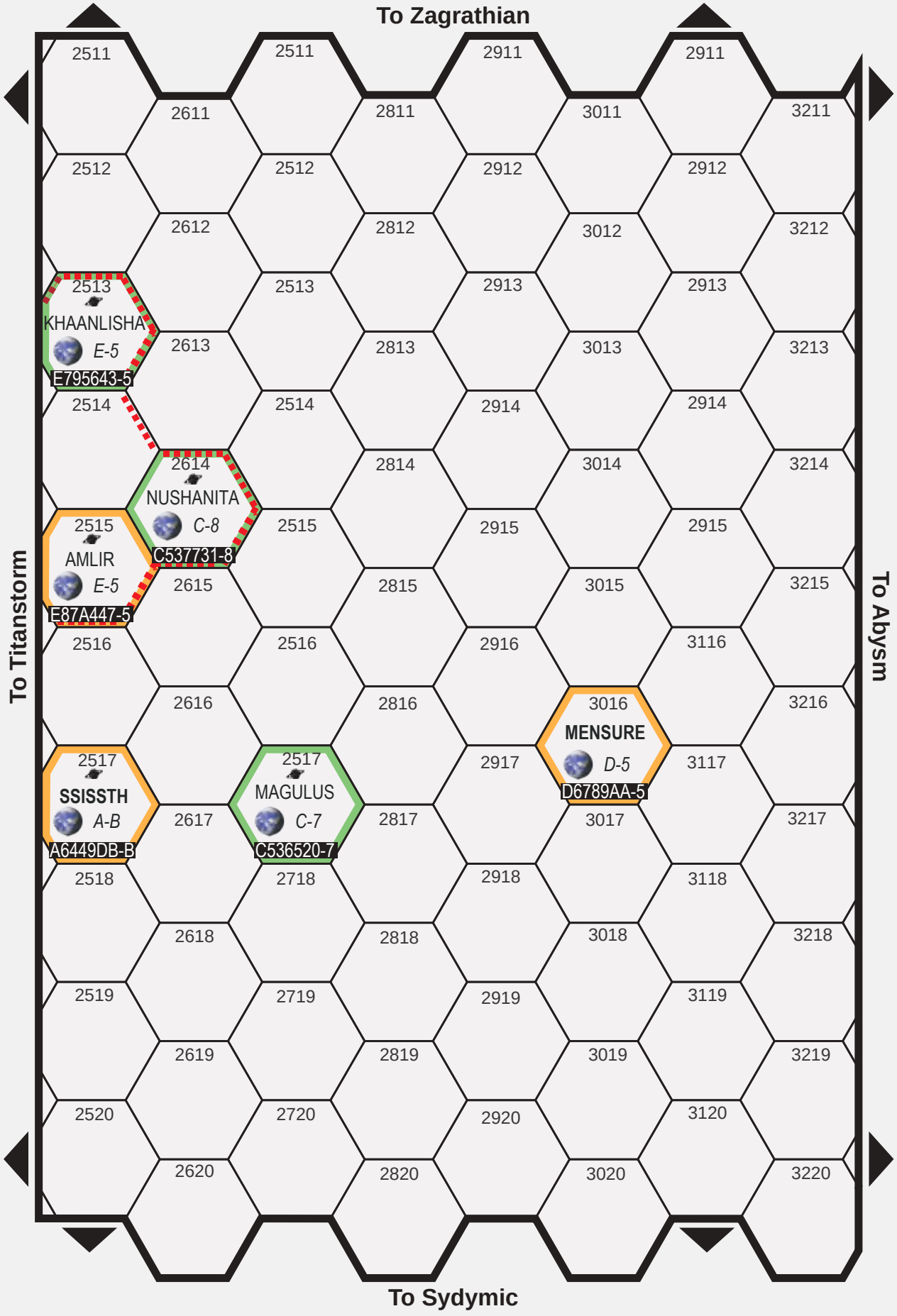
OSIRIS DEEP SUBSECTOR



the Deepnight Corporation. In return for a small fee every month, the corporation has been permitted to set up a facility to support its exploration and scientific ships. Most of these are small; typically lab ships or survey vessels, with a few in the 1,000-tons-plus class. Two major assets of the corporation are also based out of Khaanlisha. One is Deepnight Endurance, a long-duration exploration support vessel, whilst the other is the jump-5 capable Deepnight Pioneer. These vessels are engaged in exploration of the Lesser Rift and the worlds within, and call only occasionally at their nominal base. In the meantime, independent ships come to trade at the port. They bring goods the corporation might want or need, and occasionally strike it lucky when an unusual cargo is brought out of the rift.

MENSURE

Mensure is a hostile world in a system without planetoid belts or gas giants, located a long way from anywhere. The world can be reached by a jump-3 vessel by way of Magulus from the very tip of the Reaching Finger, or by a jump-5 vessel from rimward. It cannot be reached in a single jump from anywhere beyond Ley. This isolation has affected the development of society on Mensure. The world is small but dense, and rich in heavy elements. This may have been the reason for the initial settlement, although today Mensure has only TL5 available, a situation that has persisted for centuries.

The world's nine billion inhabitants are crammed into vast cities on the world's few land masses. Given that the exotic atmosphere is unbreathable by humans, it is no surprise society is rigidly controlled by central authority. Overall control is exercised by the high king, who in turn is represented by citykings and their subordinates. The positions of cityking and high king are unusual in that they are sacrificial roles. That is to say, a king rules for a period and is then ritually killed to make way for his (or her) successor. Exactly when a king is to be deposed and a new one appointed is determined by popular support or acclamation amongst the common people. A popular king might die in office but this is very rare. More commonly a troubled city will get through a succession of citykings before stability returns.

MENSURE

UWP	D6789AA–5	
Starport	D	Poor
Size	6	9,600km
Atmosphere	7	Standard; Tainted
Hydrosphere	8	80%
Population	9	Billions
Government Type	A	Charismatic Dictator
Law Level	A	Weapon possession prohibited
Technology Level	5	Mass Production

Although laws are very strict, they are seen as necessary by most of the population, so acclamation of a cityking is often the result of zealous law-enforcement on the part of the candidate. Mensure has the death penalty for many crimes. Given the population pressure, this is hardly surprising. Visitors are not exempt from these penalties, hence the imposition of an amber travel zone by the Travellers' Aid Society.

Construction on Mensure uses a lot of natural materials and processes, as does environmental protection and atmosphere processing. The locals have learned to use plant life to provide many of the benefits of hard technology. This gives their cities a strangely organic look. Despite the dense population, some areas of Mensure are wilderness. Great forests, rugged badlands and vast swamps make some regions unsuitable for human habitation; here, strange animals native to the world can be encountered. The local flora and fauna are exotic enough that Imperial scientists have made the long trip out to Mensure on many occasions. Each trip finds yet more unknown species, perhaps making the possibility of death by execution worth the risk.

SWAMP MASS

A curious multipart creature native to Mensure, the Swamp Mass has equivalents on some other worlds. Its main component is a shapeless, amorphous blob that can move but rarely does. If the central mass does move it squidges slowly over the ground by extending its forward side and contracting its rear. More commonly it will sink into marshy ground and allow vegetation to cover it. A typical mass is 3-4 metres in diameter but much larger individuals have been recorded. The central mass has no brain and few identifiable organs. Instead, their functions are highly distributed in a manner that would be inefficient in most creatures. However, the swamp mass has very low energy needs. Much of these are obtained by leaching nutrients from the surrounding soil. Being underwater is no problem for this creature so long as it can get food.

Food is obtained directly from the surroundings and by detachable tentacle-like appendages which slither into the surrounding foliage. These serve as snares for passing creatures, curling up around the body of a small animal or the legs of a larger one. Once triggered – probably by pressure, but there is little data on the subject – a tentacle will not let go. A typical tentacle requires 2D hits from a sharp implement to sever it, or five times this much bashing, stabbing or similar damage. The tentacles are designed to kill small animals and are unlikely to be fatal to a large creature. They deliver D3 damage immediately, then 1 point per hour by crushing. A tentacle taken more than 20 metres from the main mass will usually detach but sometimes one will remain attached for a much greater distance. When eventually dropped, it will begin growing into a new central mass.

Swamp masses are a hazard to humans but not a serious one – at least directly. There is always a chance of being tripped by a tentacle or having both feet bound by one, in which case the victim will fall into the swamp and may drown. There will usually be bones near a central mass, belonging to a previous victim. When live game is taken in this manner, small creatures are dragged to the central mass and absorbed, whilst larger ones are moved in sections as they decompose and break up. Alternatively, a longer tentacle may be extruded to connect the mass to its food source until it is exhausted.

Killing the central mass requires area damage such as fire or plasma. Concentrated energy weapons such as lasers are no more effective than bullets or blades; each 5 full points of damage inflicted counts as one. A dead mass will eventually regenerate unless completely destroyed.

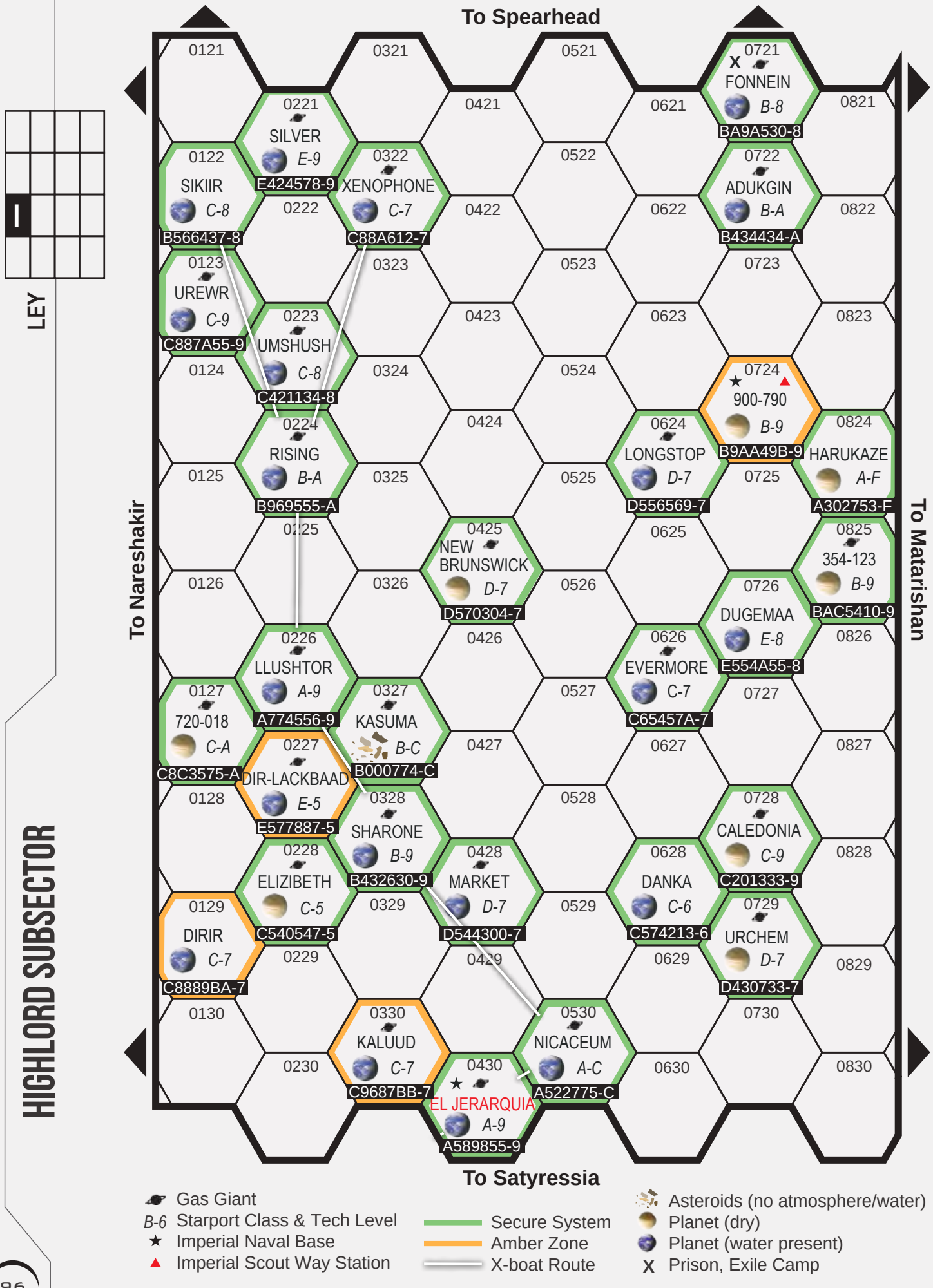
Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Swamp Mass	20	0m
Skills	None	
Attacks	Tentacles (D3)	
Traits	Large (+4)	
Behaviour	Omnivore, Static Filter	

HIGHLORD SUBSECTOR

Lying on the spinward side of Ley, Highlord contains 29 star systems, of which three contain high-population worlds. Astrographically, the subsector is characterised by clusters separated by jump-2 gaps. This gives rise to the usual pattern of local jump-1 shipping moving most of the bulk goods within a cluster, with jump-2 vessels typically plying between entry and exit points.

The Shanape Cluster is split between Highlord and neighbouring Matarishan subsectors, with the Shanape Link Worlds (otherwise known as the Linkworlds) providing a jump-2 transit into the Great Ley Cluster. Shipping moves freely between the clusters, protected by the 238th Fleet which has its base at 900-790. The system was chosen largely because it was more or less unwanted, during a period in which the Imperial Navy

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
354-123	0825	—	BAC5410-9	Fl Ni	—	Imperium	G
720-018	0127	—	C8C3575-A	Fl Ni	—	Imperium	G
900-790	0724	NW	B9AA49B-9	Fl Ni	A	Imperium	—
Adukgin	0722	—	B434434-A	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Caledonia	0728	—	C201333-9	Ic Lo Va	—	Imperium	G
Danka	0628	—	C574213-6	Lo	—	Imperium	—
Dirir	0129	—	C8889BA-7	Hi	A	Imperium	—
Dir-Lackbaad	0227	—	E577887-5	Lt	A	Imperium	G
Dugemaa	0726	—	E554A55-8	Hi	—	Imperium	—
El Jerarquía	0430	NW	A589855-9	Ri	—	Imperium	G
Elizibeth	0228	—	C540547-5	De He Lt Ni Po	—	Imperium	G
Evermore	0626	—	C65457A-7	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Fonnein	0721	—	BA9A530-8	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Harukaze	0824	—	A302753-F	Ht Ic Va	—	Imperium	—
Kaluud	0330	—	C9687BB-7	Ag Ri	A	Imperium	G
Kasuma	0327	—	B000774-C	As Ht Va	—	Imperium	G
Llushtor	0226	—	A774556-9	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Longstop	0624	—	D556569-7	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Market	0428	—	D544300-7	Lo	—	Imperium	G
New Brunswick	0425	—	D570304-7	De He Lo	—	Imperium	G
Nicaceum	0530	—	A522775-C	He Ht Na Po	—	Imperium	G
Rising	0224	—	B969555-A	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Sharone	0328	—	B432630-9	Na Ni Po	—	Imperium	G
Sikiir	0122	—	B566437-8	Ni	—	Imperium	—
Silver	0221	—	E424578-9	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Umshush	0223	—	C421134-8	He Lo Po	—	Imperium	G
Urchem	0729	—	D430733-7	De Po	—	Imperium	G
Urewr	0123	—	C887A55-9	Hi Ga	—	Imperium	G
Xenophone	0322	—	C88A612-7	Ni Ri Wa	—	Imperium	G



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HIGHLORD SUBSECTOR

preferred to distance itself from the local affairs of world governments. Since the base was established, 900-790 has been colonised but remains economically and politically unimportant.

The sector fleet base at El Jerarquia exists primarily to support operations to rimward of the Imperial border. It is home to a modest force of cruisers and light carriers which show the flag and occasionally intervene in local affairs in Glimmerdrift Reaches. The base was heavily reinforced during the Solomani Rim War and for a time housed several battle squadrons poised to repel a Solomani incursion into Glimmerdrift Reaches. Today the base is oversized and expensive to maintain but formidable. It is one of the designated fortress systems intended to halt a major K'Kree assault. This is considered extremely unlikely to happen in the next century or more by Imperial experts, but the constant clamour for something to be done about the threat from the Lords of Thunder has resulted in several rounds of fortress-building at the expense of naval production programmes.

The Imperial Interstellar Scout Service has a way station at 900-790. Unusually, it is co-located with the naval base on the surface and in orbit around the same rockball world. 900-790 is a major training installation for both services, receiving large numbers of new recruits several times a year. It also houses a large intelligence analysis centre staffed by naval personnel, members of the scout service and civilian academics. The facility is dedicated to learning as much as possible about the Lords of Thunder and producing forecasts of their likely actions. Information comes in by courier on a regular basis and occasionally innocuous-looking merchant ships enter the restricted docking area. It is an open secret that the Imperium has many such vessels out in Gateway and Glimmerdrift reaches at any given time.

KALUUD

Kaluud is a backwater world off the main trade routes, home to around 70 million people. Of these, about 20 million are Chirpers. The world is welcoming, with plenty of water and an acceptable climate, and was originally targeted for extensive colonisation during the late Rule of Man era. However, introduction of Terran species resulted in a struggle throughout the world's ecosphere which caused a variety of climatic disasters. Dustbowls, changing flood patterns and similar upheavals resulted from the displacement of native flora and much of the world's wildlife died off. Today, Kaluud's ecosphere resembles that of Terra, with a few local species and has stabilised to the point where the world is a significant manufacturer of agricultural produce.

These ecological disasters had a devastating effect on the indigenous Chirper population, which fell to a few tens of thousands and has regrown rather slowly. The Chirpers are not very intelligent but they know that humans caused the changes to their world and they are resentful. They possess only Neolithic technology but are cunning and tenacious. After a long campaign of harassment and minor guerrilla warfare the planetary government lost patience and forcibly relocated the Chirpers to regions away from the main human habitations. Carefully avoiding words like reservation, the government laid out a set of rational and sympathetic-sounding regulations which amount to apartheid.

For most humans on Kaluud, the problem is solved. They are restricted to the area around the world's cluster of small cities and the Chirpers are kept at a distance by security patrols and barriers. Those that have to venture into the countryside may be in some danger and there is a certain amount of resentment about the supposedly fair territorial restrictions. Those who feel this way protest the Chirpers have been given most of the planet whilst the more numerous humans are restricted and under siege, as some of the more rabid objectors put it. In reality, if the world government wants more territory, it simply chases the Chirpers off regardless of what agreements are in place. Kaluud is thus designated an Amber travel zone and is the subject of a great deal of wrangling at the sector duke's court.

KALUUD

UWP	C9687BB–7	
Starport	C	Routine
Size	9	14,400km
Atmosphere	6	Standard
Hydrosphere	8	80%
Population	7	Tens of millions
Government Type	B	Non-Charismatic Dictator
Law Level	B	Rigid control of civilian movement
Technology Level	7	Miniaturised Electronics

NEW BRUNSWICK

Settled by Rule of Man-era Solomani colonists, New Brunswick provides the only jump-2 link between the Shanape, Urewr and Laiskallia clusters. Through traffic is fairly light and the relative poverty of the world has prevented any serious investment in the starport. Most vessels passing through the system are owned or operating under charter to Enkaasni Freighting, LIC, which maintains a small fuelling station in orbit around the system's only gas giant, Tain. Only independent ships actually use the downport at Brunswick Prime, the world's unimpressive capital.

New Brunswick is almost entirely covered by bare rock deserts, with few habitable areas and larger numbers of impressive volcanoes. About half the population of some 2,000 souls live in or around Brunswick Prime, while the remainder eke out a nomadic existence wherever the conditions permit it. There is no actual government as such; heads of individual families make all necessary decisions, guided by an ancient settlement code that concerns itself mainly with survival measures.

Local craftsmen can support TL7 and extensive use is made of solar power for domestic use. There is little or no heavy industry and few vehicles. The locals are hardy and self-sufficient, and have little to trade with outsiders. The upshot of this is that New Brunswick remains effectively isolated despite its astrographic position.

NEW BRUNSWICK

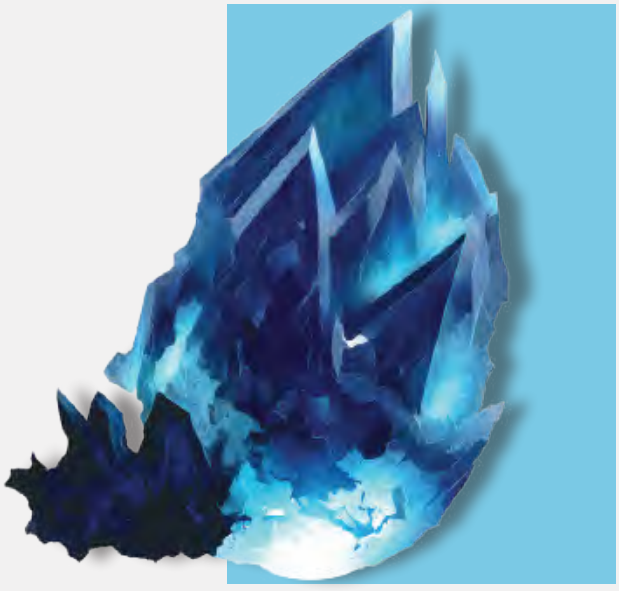
UWP	D570304–7	
Starport	D	Poor
Size	5	8,000km
Atmosphere	7	Standard; Tainted
Hydrosphere	0	Desert World
Population	3	Thousands
Government Type	0	No Government Structure
Law Level	4	Light assault weapons prohibited
Technology Level	7	Miniaturised Electronics

SPEVVMI CRYSTALS

The origins of spevvmi crystals are a closely guarded secret. Many suppose they are sourced on a remote rogue world in the Lesser Rift, a belief that is quietly supported by those who know where they really come from. According to rumour, these unique crystalline formations are found only in a certain hollow planetoid. Part of this tale is true but the point of origin is not in the rift and the crystals are not unique. In fact, there are several sources of spevvmi crystals, all inside planetoids drifting in an unknown star system. An enterprising belter crew found them and realised their sales potential and spread wild tales about the origin to preserve their find.

Spevvmi crystals have an unusual composition. They are translucent from most angles, scattering light as well as other forms of electromagnetic radiation. This is mainly useful as a novelty, enabling clever artists to create ornaments that 'sing' when subjected to certain radio frequencies or which create strange heat patterns around themselves when heated. Whilst not particularly useful, the crystals command a good price from those who admire their beauty and items crafted from them have found their way to ports across the Imperium.

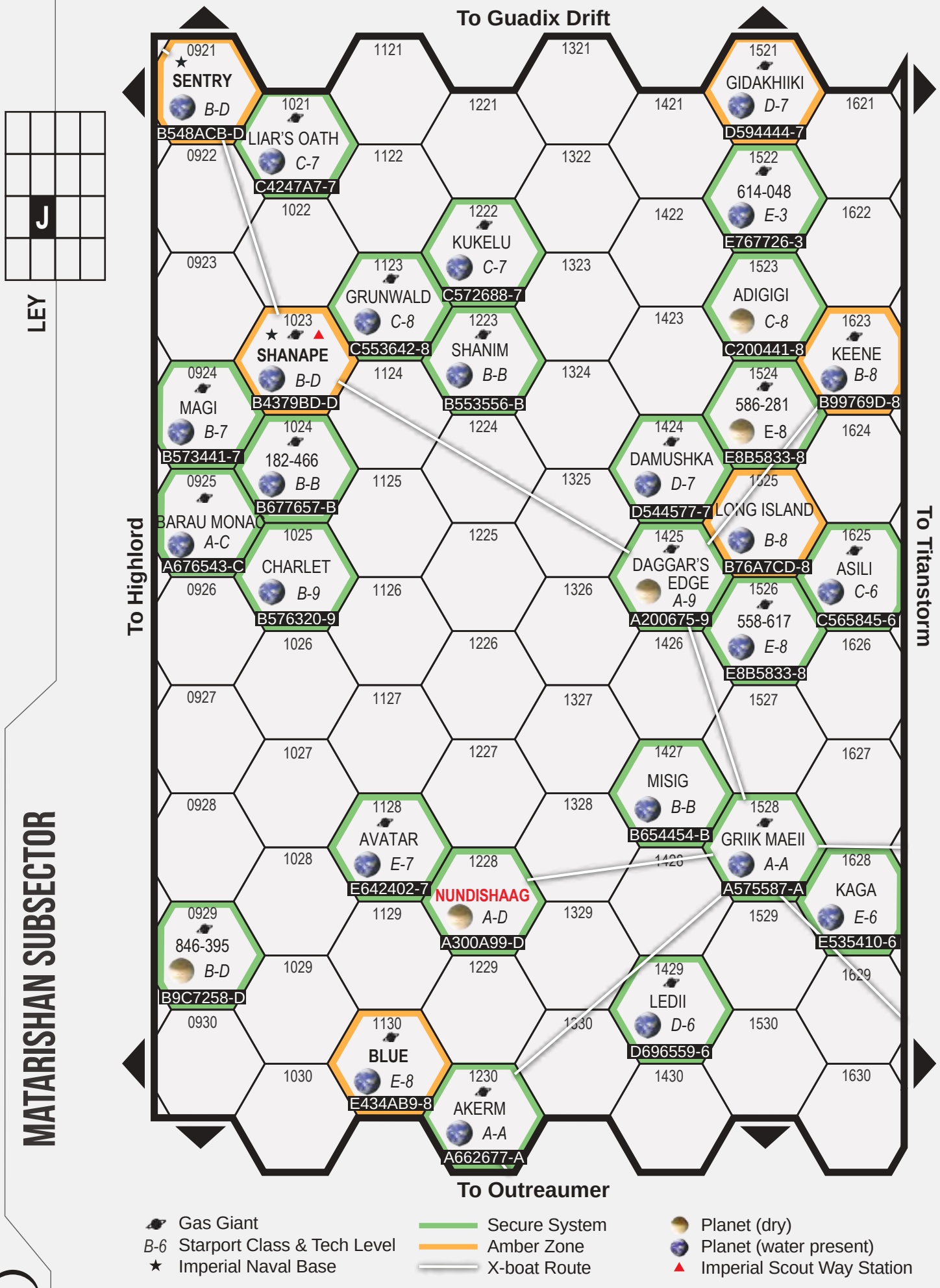
It is not clear how these crystals came to be but they are thought to be pseudo-natural. That is, they were created as a natural consequence of a process that could not occur in nature. Perhaps a planetary body was subjected to unimaginable forces, forms of energy or a psionic event transformed the rock of a shattered moon. There are those who consider the spevvmi crystal to be proof of all manner of strange theories – or a warning that there are unknown forces at work in an otherwise well understood universe.



MATARISHAN SUBSECTOR

The Matarishan subsector is named after the world of Matarishan, now known as Shanape. Settled in the last days of the Rule of Man, Matarishan was briefly home to an interstellar civilisation which lost contact with its members during the Long Night. The Matarishan Federation was reconstituted in the early years of the Third Imperium with the arrival of dissidents from Sylea and although it has been annexed into the Imperium under the name of Shanape the relationship remains difficult. The Matarishan Freedom Movement continues to advocate independence for the former Federation worlds, although through peaceful, legal methods. Other organisations, such as the Matarishan Liberation Army, are more direct and forceful.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
182-466	1024	—	B677657-B	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
558-617	1526	—	CAD9200-C	Ht Lo	—	Imperium	G
586-281	1524	—	E8B5833-8	Fl Ph	—	Imperium	G
614-048	1522	—	E767726-3	Ag Ga Lt Ri	—	Imperium	G
846-395	929	—	B9C7258-D	Fl Ht Lo	—	Imperium	G
Adigigi	1523	—	C200441-8	Ni Va	—	Imperium	—
Akerm	1230	—	A662677-A	Ni Ri	—	Imperium	G
Asili	1625	—	C565845-6	Ri	—	Imperium	G
Avatar	1128	—	E642402-7	He Ni Po	—	Imperium	G
Barau Monac	0925	—	A676543-C	Ag Ht Ni	—	Imperium	G
Blue	1130	—	E434AB9-8	Hi	A	Imperium	G
Charlet	1025	—	B576320-9	Lo	—	Imperium	—
Daggar's Edge	1425	—	A200675-9	Ni Va	—	Imperium	G
Damushka	1424	—	D544577-7	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Gidakhiiki	1521	—	D594444-7	Ni	A	Imperium	G
Griik Maeii	1528	—	A575587-A	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Grunwald	1123	—	C553642-8	Ni Po	—	Imperium	G
Kaga	1628	—	E535410-6	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Keene	1623	—	B99769D-8	Ag Ni	A	Imperium	G
Kukelu	1222	—	C572688-7	He Ni	—	Imperium	G
Ledii	1429	—	D696559-6	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Liar's Oath	1021	—	C4247A7-7	Pi	—	Imperium	G
Long Island	1525	—	B76A7CD-8	Ri Wa	A	Imperium	G
Magi	924	—	B573441-7	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Misig	1427	—	B654454-B	Ni	—	Imperium	—
Nundishaag	1228	—	A300A99-D	Hi Ht In Va	—	Imperium	—
Sentry	0921	N	B548ACB-D	Hi Ht In	A	Imperium	—
Shanape	1023	NW	B4379BD-D	Hi Ht	A	Imperium	G
Shanim	1223	—	B553556-B	Ni Po	—	Imperium	G


To Guadix Drift
To Highlord
To Titanstorm
To Outreaumer
0921
SENTRY
B-D
B548ACB-D
1021
LIAR'S OATH
C-7
C4247A7-7
1121
1221
1321
1421
1521
GIDAKHIIKI
D-7
D594444-7
1621
0922
1022
1122
1222
KUKELU
C-7
C572688-7
1322
1522
614-048
E-3
E767726-3
1422
1622
0923
1123
GRUNWALD
C-8
C553642-8
1323
1523
ADIGIGI
C-8
C200441-8
1423
1623
KEENE
B-8
B99769D-8
1023
SHANAPE
B-D
B4379BD-D
1223
SHANIM
B-B
B553556-B
0924
MAGI
B-7
B573441-7
1024
182-466
B-B
B677657-B
1124
1324
1524
586-281
E-8
E8B5833-8
1624
0925
BARAU MONAC
A-C
A676543-C
1025
CHARLET
B-9
B576320-9
1125
1225
1325
1424
DAMUSHKA
D-7
D544577-7
1525
LONG ISLAND
B-8
B76A7CD-8
1625
ASILI
C-6
C565845-6
0926
1026
1126
1226
1425
DAGGAR'S EDGE
A-9
A200675-9
1526
558-617
E-8
E8B5833-8
1626
0927
1027
1127
1227
1327
1427
MISIG
B-B
B654454-B
1527
1627
0928
1028
1128
AVATAR
E-7
E642402-7
1228
NUNDISHAAG
A-D
A300A99-D
1328
1528
GRIIK MAEII
A-A
A575587-A
1628
KAGA
E-6
E535410-6
0929
846-395
B-D
B9C7258-D
1029
1129
1229
1329
1529
1629
0930
1030
1130
BLUE
E-8
E434AB9-8
1230
AKERM
A-A
A662677-A
1330
1429
LEDII
D-6
D696559-6
1530
1430
1630
LEY
MATARISHAN SUBSECTOR
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
★ Imperial Naval Base
Secure System
Amber Zone
X-boat Route
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)
▲ Imperial Scout Way Station

Matarishan subsector contains 29 star systems, most of which lie in the Shanape Cluster or on the rimward tip of the Reaching Arm. It is protected by the 261st Fleet, which has its headquarters at Shanape and a secondary base at Sentry. With the majority of the sector fleet based at Depot, just over the border in the Guadix Drift subsector, Matarishan does not host a permanent sector fleet deployment. Nevertheless, its cruisers are commonly sighted in the major systems of the subsector, showing the flag and reminding dissidents the navy is not far away.

BARAU MONAC

Lying more or less in the middle of the Shanape Cluster, Barau Monac is a habitable world which was never developed to any great extent. Its main asset is its excellent starport and like many such worlds the planetary population can be considered as an outgrowth of the port economy. The vast majority of income is generated by trade and starship services at the port, with industries serving mainly to meet local needs.

The planetary government is based at the highport, which is unusual, and the planetary population have a lower standard of living than those dwelling in orbit. This them and us attitude extends to external politics as well as society on-planet. The world government sees itself as part of the Imperium and has more in common with the ships coming through the port than the disadvantaged citizens below. Social Climbing has a very literal meaning on Barau Monac; anyone who can afford it wants a place in the highport's society and jobs there are used to reward government supporters.

Support for the Matarishan Liberation Army has been growing on-planet for many years and some settlements are now under the control of its militias. For the most part this has been accomplished in a polite and low-key manner without triggering much of a response, but as the MLA gains confidence and no firm response is made it is only a matter of time before more of the planet falls or open conflict begins. It appears the planetary government prefers to ignore the problem – or perhaps some elements of the government actually condone what is happening. If the MLA takes over enough of Barau Monac a secession attempt is likely, which will trigger Imperial intervention. What form this takes remains to be seen.

BARAU MONAC

UWP	A676543–C	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	6	9,600km
Atmosphere	7	Standard; Tainted
Hydrosphere	6	60%
Population	5	Hundreds of thousands
Government Type	4	Representative Democracy
Law Level	3	Machine guns, automatic rifles prohibited
Technology Level	C	Average Imperial

MLA ORGANISATION AND OPERATIONS

The Matarishan Liberation Army uses a flexible organisation, as much out of necessity as a desire for effectiveness. Its forces belong to two general types – field and security. Security forces are ostensibly geared towards controlling and protecting territory, whilst field forces are intended to destroy enemies. However, this split is not as simple as it sounds. Security forces might better be described as armed political and economic actors whilst field forces have a primarily military role.

Within a security force there will usually be diplomatic and liaison detachments, negotiators, lawyers and traders. Some personnel will be equipped to a military standard but most are intended for a peacekeeping role. One standard technique for winning over an area is for a security force to assist local police in removing criminal elements. This means bypassing due process and forcibly arresting anyone suspected of a serious crime and placing them before an MLA court. In theory the outcome of this trial is advisory and the suspect will be handed over to local authorities. In practice, proceedings are dragged out as long as possible, such that those who have not confessed or been proven guilty are still being prosecuted by the time the MLA has taken control over the local authorities. At that point the sentence is rubber-stamped.

MLA commanders are adept at winning hearts and minds. The arrival of a security force means an increase in stability, a drop in crime, new business opportunities and assistance for those with a grievance against the local authorities. The MLA uses a push gently but push always approach in most areas, gradually moving into a position of trust and support. This is most effective when the local or Imperial authorities have failed to deal with problems. The MLA learned long ago that work crews repairing the roads neglected by the planetary government are worth more than patrols marching along those roads.

Security forces use civilian vehicles for the most part, typically the equivalent of wheeled or grav SUVs and light trucks. Weaponry is, similarly, what would be associated with security rather than military forces – sidearms backed up by shotguns, with some personnel armed with sniping rifles, submachineguns and the like. A security force might also have a stash of military hardware, such as anti-armour systems and support weapons, but this is sufficient only to provide stiff resistance to a raid rather than to defend cities from a major assault.

Field forces are likewise lightly equipped but along military lines. They are more suited to counter-insurgency (or more commonly, counter-counter-insurgency) work than battling a serious military force. Some civilian vehicles are used for transport, logistics and as light weapons carriers, with small numbers of light armoured vehicles and personnel carriers available for spearhead operations. Anti-armour and anti-aerospace weapons are available in significant numbers but most are short-range infantry-crewed systems. Any large anti-aerospace or artillery system the MLA obtains is a major asset to be carefully husbanded.

Command of both field and security forces is exercised on a minimalist basis. Command units are designated task, local, area and regional and have an appropriate (if very lean) structure. A task command consists of a leader assisted by a communications operator and typically two to four other personnel. This is sufficient to run most field tasks, which involve less than 50 personnel and their equipment, or to administrate part of a town. A local command team is usually about ten personnel and is considered sufficient to run a company-sized military force or to administrate a town. Area command is considered equivalent to a battalion, small city or a group of towns spread over a modest area. Regional commanders are assigned to cities or a fairly large area, possibly commanding miliary forces greater than a battalion equivalent.

Above the regional level command is exercised by the MLA's generals. These high-status individuals generally communicate through cut-outs and proxies, so can be difficult to identify. As with all levels of command no distinction is made about areas of expertise. Some commanders are better suited to administration and others to military command, but all are expected to do what is necessary. For example, a regional commander has authority over all MLA forces in their area of operations unless a general is personally commanding a force, and is also responsible for the security and political aspects of the mission. This can lead to weaknesses but commanders have authority to appoint assistants and advisors as they see fit.

Command structures are built on an ad-hoc and as-needed basis out of assets that are designated teams, detachments, companies, forces or armies according to their strength. Teams are typically a handful of personnel – in any field ranging from finance to military engineering – with their own leader. A detachment is typically formed of multiple teams and might be anything from 15 to 60 personnel strong. Companies typically contain three to five detachments and some teams. Higher formations are rarely formed but would be termed a force if deployed in the equivalent of battalion or brigade strength. Anything above 2,500 personnel would be termed an army by the MLA and led by a general. This command structure is personal rather than official, and can produce highly variable results. When it works it is responsive and well-tailored to the local situation, although the loss of a key individual can result in a collapse.

LONG ISLAND

Long Island is a water world located almost at the very end of the Reaching Arm. It is ruled by a hereditary pseudo-nobility made of business owners and financiers, most of whom have interests on the surrounding worlds or even farther afield. The world is named for its single land mass, a snaky island over 250 kilometres long but rarely more than 40 kilometres wide. The rest of the planet is covered in oceans which are farmed from underwater settlements. Most of the 10 million population live on Long Island itself, or in cities built on the continental shelf close to it. The only significant inland settlement is the startown surrounding the downport.

Society is rigidly controlled by a paramilitary security force which also serves as a conventional military. Among its assets are deep-diving submarines carrying orbital defence missiles. These are built offworld and shipped in but the subs are of local design. The maritime element of the planetary security force is involved in a constant battle with the world's large aquatic predators which are attracted to the fish farms and can cause havoc if not driven off.

Long Island receives relatively few tourists, largely as a result of enthusiastic enforcement of its restrictive laws but one attraction brings a steady stream of maritime scientists and well-off tourists. This is the Great Forest, an area of shallows populated by tall, tree-like plants. These breach the surface, with the tallest standing tens of metres out of the water. Free-floating sea plants catch in the lower fronds of the trees, creating a unique environment which supports a huge range of animal life both above and below the surface.

LONG ISLAND

UWP	B76A7CD–8	
Starport	B	Good
Size	7	11,200km
Atmosphere	6	Standard
Hydrosphere	A	Water World
Population	7	Tens of millions
Government Type	C	Charismatic Oligarchy
Law Level	D	Paramilitary law enforcement
Technology Level	8	Quality Computers

CINGESSE SHEPHERD

The cingesse shepherd is named for its curious manner of feeding. It has a central body resembling a very large flat fish or ray, propelled through the water by rippling the outer surfaces. There are two pronounced shoulders at the front, from which extend long tentacles. When the creature is moving fast these tuck under the body and trail behind it but when it is time to feed, they are extended wide out to the sides and brought forward in a long curve. Most fish between the tentacles will swim away but some can be shepherded towards the creature's enormous maw.

Tentacles can reach 50 metres in length on a large specimen and can be used to grab or bash people and objects. The maw would inflict at least 6D damage on anyone drawn into it but that is only likely to happen to helpless or unconscious people. Cingesse shepherds do not grab and pull food into its mouth, they guide panicked fish in that direction. Lurid tales of these creatures dragging crewmembers off nearby boats are only partially true – a shepherd will certainly knock someone overboard it if can but a strong swimmer may evade the maw with ease. Indeed, whilst carnivorous and aggressively territorial, these creatures are better considered as filter feeders than hunters.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Cingesse Shepherd	150	8m
Skills	Survival 1	
Attacks	Tentacles (2D) or Maw (6D)	
Traits	Armour (+4), Large (+6)	
Behaviour	Carnivore, Herding Filter	

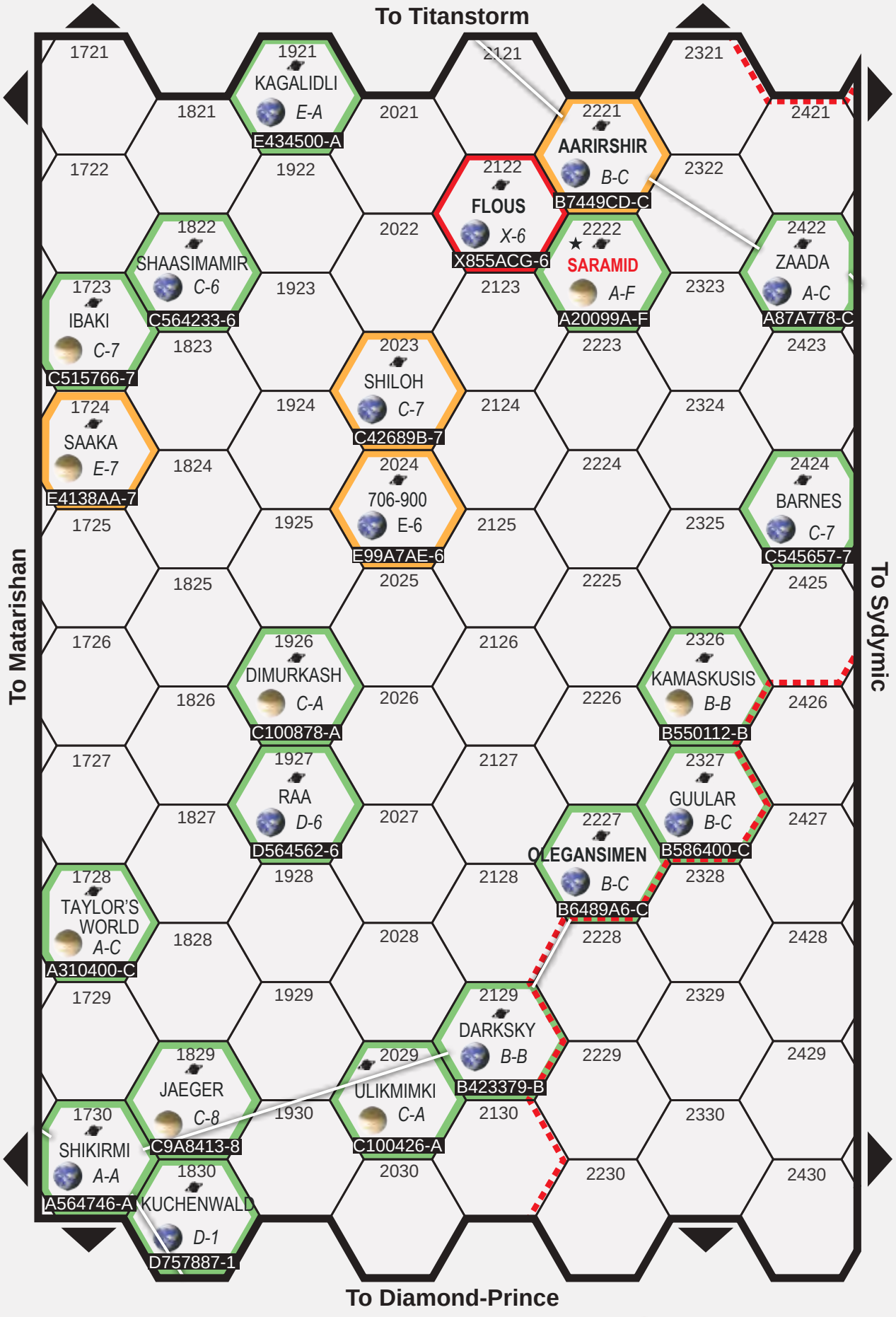
FRONTIER WORLDS SUBSECTOR

Frontier Worlds lies on the fringe of the Third Imperium, with a three-parsec gap separating the Imperial border from the neighbouring Khuur League for most of its length. Other than a small segment of the Reaching Arm there are no significant clusters or mains. The subsector capital at Saramid has a high population and a TL15 industrial base, making it one of the most economically important worlds in the region. It is a little isolated astrographically, requiring a jump-2 vessel to reach. Saramid is the most trailingward point where ships belonging to Tukera Lines or Imperiallines are regularly seen, although other megacorporations have interests further from the Imperial heartland.

The subsector is secured by the 262nd Fleet, which has its headquarters at Saramid. This is one of the better-equipped subsector fleets in Ley, although most of its assets are older destroyers and escorts. Elements of the sector fleet also use the Saramid naval complex but are almost exclusively employed in showing the flag along and just outside the border. The bitter war with the Khuur League was not so long ago that the Imperial authorities are prepared to discount the possibility of further hostilities. Naval officers in this region are charged with both preventing a war – by deterrence and diplomacy – and warning of impending conflict in time to pre-empt it. Although not considered likely, Frontier Worlds is one of the next war candidates monitored by Imperial Naval Intelligence.

In addition, Frontier Worlds is considered a likely route into Imperial space for invading K'Kree fleets. Plans to harden The Gate – Sydymic, Outreaumer, Diamond-Prince and Outworld subsectors – are in motion but proceeding slowly. Annexation would be necessary before naval bases could be built and fortress worlds

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
706-900	2024	—	E99A7AE-6	Wa	A	Imperium	G
Aarirshir	2221	—	B7449CD-C	Hi Ht In	A	Imperium	G
Barnes	2424	—	C545657-7	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Darksky	2129	—	B423379-B	Lo Po	—	Imperium	G
Dimurkash	1926	—	C100878-A	Na Va	—	Imperium	G
Flous	2122	—	X855ACG-6	Hi Ga Fo	R	Imperium	G
Guular	2327	—	B586400-C	Ht Ni	—	Imperium	G
Ibaki	1723	—	C515766-7	Ic	—	Imperium	G
Jaeger	1829	—	C9A8413-8	Fl Ni	—	Imperium	G
Kagalidli	1921	—	E434500-A	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Kamaskusis	2326	—	B550112-B	De Lo Po	—	Imperium	G
Kuchenwald	1830	—	D757887-1	Ga Lt	—	Imperium	G
Olegansimen	2227	—	B6489A6-C	Hi Ht In	—	Imperium	G
Raa	1927	—	D564562-6	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Saaka	1724	—	E4138AA-7	Ic	A	Imperium	G
Saramid	2222	N	A20099A-F	Hi Ht In Na Va	—	Imperium	G
Shaasimamir	1822	—	C564233-6	Lo	—	Imperium	G
Shikirmi	1730	—	A564746-A	Ag Ri	—	Imperium	G
Shiloh	2023	—	C42689B-7	—	A	Imperium	G
Taylor's World	1728	—	A310400-C	Ht Ni	—	Imperium	G
Ulikmimki	2029	—	C100426-A	Ni Va	—	Imperium	G
Zaada	2422	—	A87A778-C	Ht Wa	—	Imperium	G



Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
★ Imperial Naval Base

Secure System
Amber Zone
Red Zone

Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)
Imperium Border
X-boat Route

K

LEY

FRONTIER WORLDS SUBSECTOR

created, and this seems less likely now than a century ago. One solution would be to fortify Frontier Worlds, but it is less of a choke point than The Gate. There is little money for the project in any case, and the Imperial authorities are unwilling to finance defences that might not be necessary for centuries – and which could be bypassed with relative ease.

SARAMID

A high-population, high-tech world which is also the subsector capital, Saramid is the very definition of important and its citizens know that. Their living standards are extremely high due to extensive TL15 industry and the profits made by the excellent starport. The planet itself is an airless rockball but that matters very little. Most people consider themselves citizens of the Imperium rather than of a particular world; they just happen to live on this one but their interests lie everywhere. This extends to a voracious appetite for information about far-fluing Imperial regions. The goings-on at the court of the Duke of Tobia, on the other side of the Imperium in the Trojan Reach, are as popular a topic of conversation as shares in Naasirka on the Ley stock market. One consequence of this is a tendency to try to gain the lead over each other about current affairs and the implications of even in obscure places.

A particular area of interest, perhaps not surprisingly, is the expansion of Imperial interests into Gateway and the possibility of a clash with the Lords of Thunder. The Loyal Sector Guard has a huge following on Saramid and nowhere more so than at the planetary university. There, the LSG is one of the most popular societies. It produces many prominent graduates who proudly display their uniforms and banners. Underneath this façade of noisy but ultimately harmless anti-K'Kree sentiment is a harder core of agitation which includes fundraising and recruiting for voluntary service in various places – many of which are far away in Gateway. Whilst officially this is disapproved of, the authorities have never done anything to prevent it.

TAYLOR'S WORLD

Taylor's World is an example of a system state rather than a single world. The mainworld is a small chunk of rock with a trace of gas and no surface water, useful primarily as a place to put a starport in orbit over. It is home to about 90,000 people who are scattered in small communities with virtually no governmental structure. A loose Council for Cooperation and Mediation based at the highport handles most disputes and beyond that simple economics governs the system.

The settlements on Taylor's World, as well as a significant belter population and various commercial installations scattered around the system, are all represented to the Council. It mostly acts as a collective bargaining association and benefits the various interests in the system sufficiently that most accept the Council's leadership. As a result, Taylor's World has a reasonable system economy even if all the component parts are small enough to be insignificant. The arrival of new players in this very loose politico-economic game

SARAMID

UWP	A20099A–F	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	2	3,200km
Atmosphere	0	No atmosphere
Hydrosphere	0	Desert World
Population	9	Billions
Government Type	9	Impersonal Bureaucracy
Law Level	A	Weapon possession prohibited
Technology Level	F	Technical Imperial Maximum

TAYLOR'S WORLD

UWP	A310400–C	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	3	4,800km
Atmosphere	1	Trace
Hydrosphere	0	Desert World
Population	4	Tens of thousands
Government Type	0	No Government Structure
Law Level	0	No prohibitions
Technology Level	C	Average Imperial

can cause some upset from time-to-time but overall, the system's internal politics are self-regulating. Everyone needs everyone else and cooperation generally benefits all involved.

GAS GIANT ECONOMICS

Gas giants can be an important source of raw materials, both directly and through exploitation of their moons and associated planetoids. Many gas giants have gathered a cluster of planetoids at their leading and trailing Trojan points, 60 degrees ahead of and behind the giant planet in its orbit. Trojan bodies are also sometimes associated with smaller planets but they tend to be single or small in number rather than the clusters associated with larger giants. These clusters can be useful to miners and prospectors, and those wanting to set up a base where it might not be found. The navy spends a significant amount of time surveying Trojan clusters in case they are being used by smugglers or similar undesirables.

The gas giant itself cannot be mined but its atmosphere can be skimmed. Most ships doing this are seeking fuel and one way to make money from a gas giant is to set up a refuelling station in orbit around it. Many ship operators will pay for the convenience of taking on refined fuel from a station rather than skimming it themselves. Various other chemicals can be extracted from a gas giant's atmosphere, notably complex hydrocarbons. Whilst petrochemicals are of limited use as fuels in an interstellar economy, they are used in the creation of various plastics and polymers.

A gas giant chemical extraction facility usually consists of an orbital gas rig and shuttles which undertake the skimming process. A few rigs descend into the atmosphere themselves, although this is riskier and produces more wear in the long term. Mobile skimming operations may use a skimmer/refinery vessel, filling up with compressed gases then processing them on the way back to base. All of these methods are viable providing the atmosphere is not too turbulent and radioactivity is within tolerable limits.

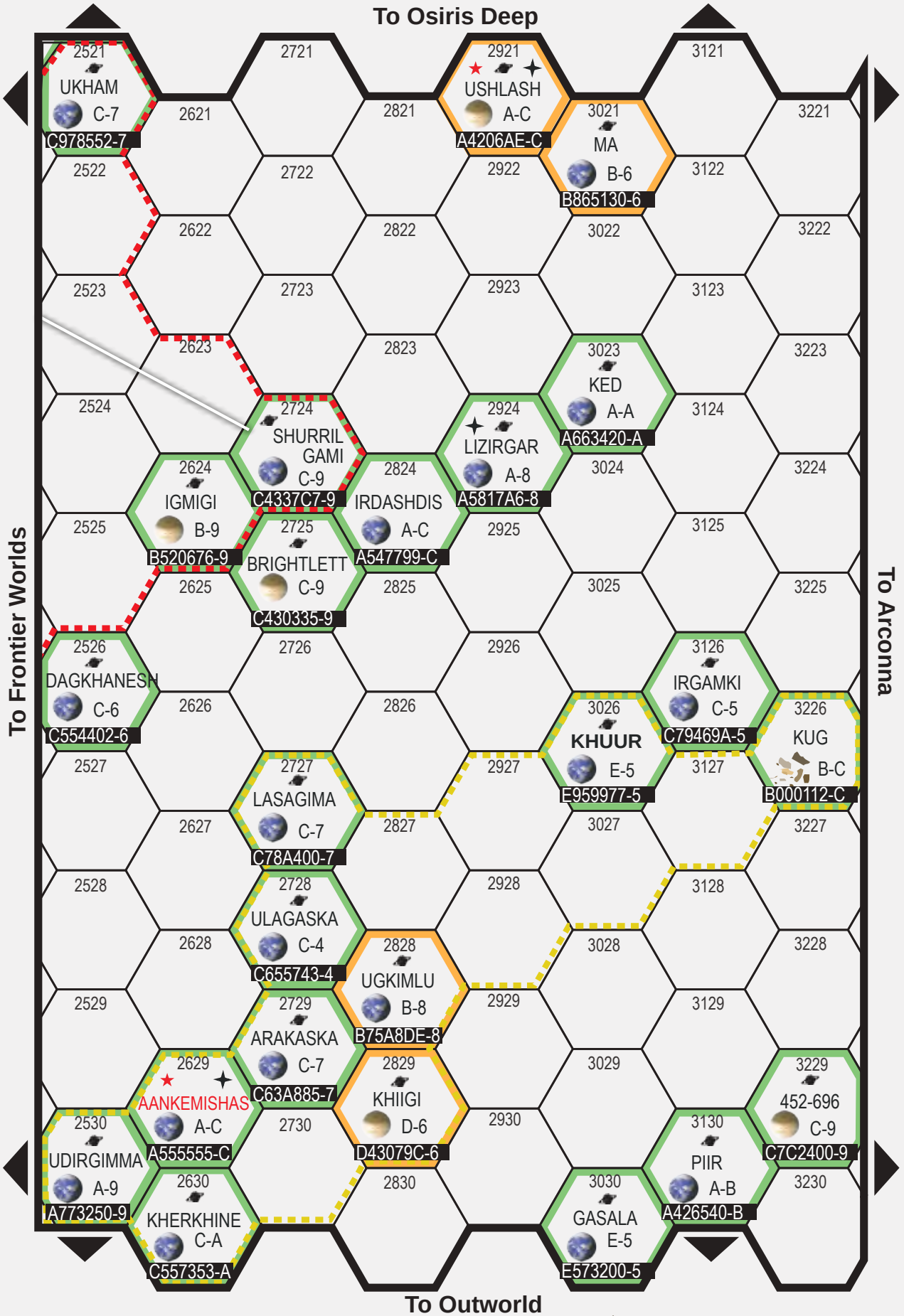
In systems with gas giants but no system government capable of enforcing its territorial claims, gas-mining is something of a free-for-all. The Imperium has laws governing such activity and some other states regulate it to some extent. In some areas gas-mining rigs or planetoid mining facilities have become trade hubs, with facilities for visiting ships gradually expanding until the installation becomes a starport in all but name. Such facilities are usually protected to a greater or lesser degree, as raiders are always on the lookout for an easy target.

SYDYMIC SUBSECTOR

Sydymic lies almost entirely outside the Imperial border and is one of the subsectors making up the region loosely known as The Gate. The majority of worlds are part of the Khuur League, most of whose systems are within one parsec of one another. The main exception is the old Sydite homeworld of Sopater, now known as Khuur. This system has a high population but is of low importance. Khuur was heavily damaged by Imperial forces and it proved more convenient to move the capital than to rebuild. Today the League's capital is on Aankemishas, which is also the site of the polity's only naval installation.

The Khuur League is not hostile to the Imperium as such, although memories of bitter conflict remain. Trade links are impeded by a three-parsec gap, forcing most ships to go around by way of Outworld and Diamond-Prince subsectors. Contact with the Galian Federation to trailing in Gateway is much easier. Trade relations with Phoniwt are also important to the League. In recent years, Hiver trade ships out of Gashuki have become regular visitors to the rimward end of the Khuur League, where they are generally very welcome. Exotic goods shipped all the way from the Hive Federation have never really caught on in the League but the Hiver traders are smart enough to tailor their wares to the rather unimaginative Sydite market.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
452-696	3229	—	C7C2400-9	Fl He Ni	—	Imperium	G
Aankemishas	2629	NM	A555555-C	Ag Ht Ni	—	Khuur	—
Arakaska	2729	—	C63A885-7	Wa	—	Khuur	G
Brightlett	2725	—	C430335-9	De Lo Po	—	Imperium	G
Dagkhanesh	2526	—	C554402-6	Ni Pa	—	Imperium	G
Gasala	3030	—	E573200-5	Lo Lt	—	Imperium	G
Igmigi	2624	—	B520676-9	De He Na Ni Po	—	Imperium	G
Iizirgar	2924	M	A5817A6-8	Ri	—	—	G
Irdashdis	2824	—	A547799-C	Ag Ht	—	—	—
Irgamki	3126	—	C79469A-5	Ag Ni Lt	—	Imperium	G
Ked	3023	—	A663420-A	Ni	—	—	G
Kherkhine	2630	—	C557353-A	Lo	—	Khuur	G
Khiigi	2829	—	D43079C-6	De Po	A	Khuur	G
Khuur	3026	—	E959977-5	Hi Lt	—	Khuur	G
Kug	3226	—	B000112-C	As Ht Lo Va	—	Khuur	G
Lasagima	2727	—	C78A400-7	Ni Wa	—	Khuur	G
Ma	3021	—	B865130-6	Lo Ga	A	—	G
Piir	3130	—	A426540-B	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Shurril Gami	2724	—	C4337C7-9	Na Po	—	Imperium	G
Udirgimma	2530	—	A773520-9	Ni SydiW	—	Khuur	G
Ugkimlu	2828	—	B75A8DE-8	Wa	A	Khuur	G
Ukham	2521	—	C978552-7	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Ulagaska	2728	—	C655743-4	Ag Ga Lt	—	Khuur	G
Ushlash	2921	NM	A4206AE-C	De Ht Ni Po	A	—	G


To Osiris Deep
To Frontier Worlds
To Arconna
To Outworld
2521
UKHAM
C-7
C978552-7
2921
USHLASH
A-C
A4206AE-C
3021
MA
B-6
B865130-6
3023
KED
A-A
A663420-A
2724
SHURRIL
GAMI
C-9
C4337C7-9
2924
LIZIRGAR
A-8
A5817A6-8
2624
IGMIGI
B-9
B520676-9
2824
IRDASHDIS
A-C
A547799-C
2725
BRIGHTLETT
C-9
C430335-9
2526
DAGKHANESH
C-6
C554402-6
3126
IRGAMKI
C-5
C79469A-5
3026
KHUUR
E-5
E959977-5
3226
KUG
B-C
B000112-C
2727
LASAGIMA
C-7
C78A400-7
2728
ULAGASKA
C-4
C655743-4
2828
UGKIMLU
B-8
B75A8DE-8
2729
ARAKASKA
C-7
C63A885-7
2629
AANKEMISHAS
A-C
A555555-C
2829
KHIIGI
D-6
D43079C-6
3229
452-696
C-9
C7C2400-9
2530
UDIRGIMMA
A-9
A773250-9
2630
KHERKHINE
C-A
C557353-A
3130
PIIR
A-B
A426540-B
3030
GASALA
E-5
E573200-5
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Other Naval Base
Military Base/Garrison
Secure System
Amber Zone
X-boat Route
Khuur League Border
Asteroids (no atmosphere/water)
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)
Imperium Border

IRGAMKI		
UWP	C79469A–5	
Starport	C	Routine
Size	7	11,200km
Atmosphere	9	Dense; Tainted
Hydrosphere	4	40%
Population	6	Millions
Government Type	9	Impersonal Bureaucracy
Law Level	A	Weapon possession prohibited
Technology Level	5	Mass Production

IRGAMKI

Irgamki is an Imperial client state located four parsecs beyond the Imperial border, next to Khuur. It is a former world of the Sydymic Empire but has gradually moved closer to the Imperium in terms of politics and culture. Irgamki is rather difficult to get to from Imperial space and is more likely to receive a visit from ships based out of Tharver than from the Frontier Worlds.

The world has rather poor natural resources but farming of a variety of fungal organisms provides some income. The vast majority of the produce is processed close to the farms and shipped to Tharver where it is used to make cheap rations for the starship and mining industries. Despite the rather dry conditions, Irgamki's fungal life is quite varied. This permits a surprisingly palatable range of dishes to be produced without many imported ingredients. Occasionally the datanets are flooded with revelations about the superfood properties of Irgamki's fungus, leading to a rush by enterprising merchants to buy up large quantities. There is no scientific basis to these claims but that does not stop the datanet ads from screaming about how 'Irgamki Fungus provides 10 Vital Benefits (eat daily)' for a few days before moving on to some other nonsense.

KHUUR		
UWP	E959977–5	
Starport	E	Frontier Installation
Size	9	14,400km
Atmosphere	5	Thin
Hydrosphere	9	90%
Population	9	Billions
Government Type	7	Balkanisation
Law Level	7	Shotguns prohibited
Technology Level	5	Mass Production

KHUUR

Khuur, homeworld of the Sydites, is a wet world with a thin atmosphere situated almost at the extreme trailing edge of Ley. Home to some five billion people, the majority of the planet is at the low end of mid-technology and therefore of little economic importance. It is the spiritual home of the Sydite people and still holds a powerful mystique for them. Indeed, diplomatic and certain favoured merchant vessels are registered out of Khuur. There is no proper starport on Khuur and registry of vessels is actually handled at the capital. However, the honorary status of being a Khuur ship grants a higher level of prestige throughout the league than ships registered out of other worlds, even the capital.

The population of Khuur are divided among its small continents in loose associations of cities and regional administrations. Some retain the trappings of the old Sydymic Empire but most are workmanlike bureaucratic systems led by the more imaginative and driven members of their society. A strong sense of community and a general lack of personal ambition means these quasi-nations are on the whole peaceable and productive. Each has its own landing area for visiting ships but these are rare. A standing deployment from the Khuur League's naval base discourages landings by any vessel not registered out of Khuur or carrying an approved-visitor tag in its transponder code.

THE IRGAMKI TAINT

Atmospheric taints can vary considerably. The common factor is that they require a filter mask or similar protection. This assumes a visitor to the world, as in some cases the locals have become accustomed and more or less immune to the taint. Taints that are inert are the easiest to deal with. Gaseous atmospheric contaminants, dust or similar materials are easy to filter out and require little more than a barrier to prevent inhalation. Those that are toxic or radioactive require some form of decontamination to prevent them being carried inside a structure or vehicle.

Irgamki's taint is biological, making it one of the most difficult to deal with. In the case of Irgamki the taint takes the form of fungal spores which will grow in the respiratory tract and can be passed on to another person once the fungal growth has developed enough to cause symptoms. These are typical of such an infection; shortness of breath and a general malaise accompanied by elevated body temperature. Infection is rarely fatal but can be debilitating if not treated. 2D days after infection the victim begins to feel ill and suffers slight breathing difficulties. This translates to a loss of END -1. Every 1D days after this, the patient must make a Difficult (10+) END check using their reduced END. Failure indicates the loss of END to a maximum of 1D+3, determined when the infection is discovered. Someone whose END is reduced to 0 will slowly suffocate but can be supported by artificial breathing assistance until treatment is complete.

A few patients recover naturally but most require medical treatment to kill the infection. If treatment is not available, the patient must live with the condition and may pose a hazard to others as they breathe out spores. Every 2D months, the Traveller must make a Difficult (10+) END check. Success indicates the condition has been eliminated by their immune system. Failure does not make things any worse. Treatment usually means a course of anti-fungal drugs and some supportive therapy such as enhanced oxygen delivery. Whether naturally or artificially eliminated, once the infection has gone the lost END is regained at a rate of 1 every 2D days.

Disease	END check	Damage	Interval
Irgamki Respiratory Fungal Infection	Difficult (10+)	END-1 (max. 1D+3)	1D Days

SATYRESSIA SUBSECTOR

Satyressia contains six star systems. One of them, Secundus, can be said to lie out in the Delphi Rift and Gambler's Ruin is also very isolated. The other four systems are accessible by a jump-2 ship from Zukhin and Highlord subsectors. Traffic is very low, even along the x-boat route through L'Orient and Ipsham. The subsector has a numbered fleet, the 192nd, but it only has a handful of vessels at its disposal.

During the Solomani Rim War, a number of commerce raiders were active in the coreward end of Ley. They were supported by auxiliaries but operating at the end of a very long supply chain. The question of how these vessels were able to maintain high-tempo operations and make repairs after receiving combat damage has troubled Imperial analysts ever since. The Long Night Remembrance movement, a violently pro-Vilani/anti-Solomani organisation, insists that either a secret Solomani Confederation base was established in the subsector or a segment of the local population was covertly supporting the raiders.

No evidence has been found by the authorities but to this day LNR continues to agitate for a purge of Solomani sympathy in the subsector and those surrounding it. LNR operatives have kidnapped a number of prominent citizens of Solomani descent and interrogated them about the matter. This resulted in a great many arrests among Long Night Remembrance members, which in turn produced allegations of Solomani collaboration amongst the sector authorities.

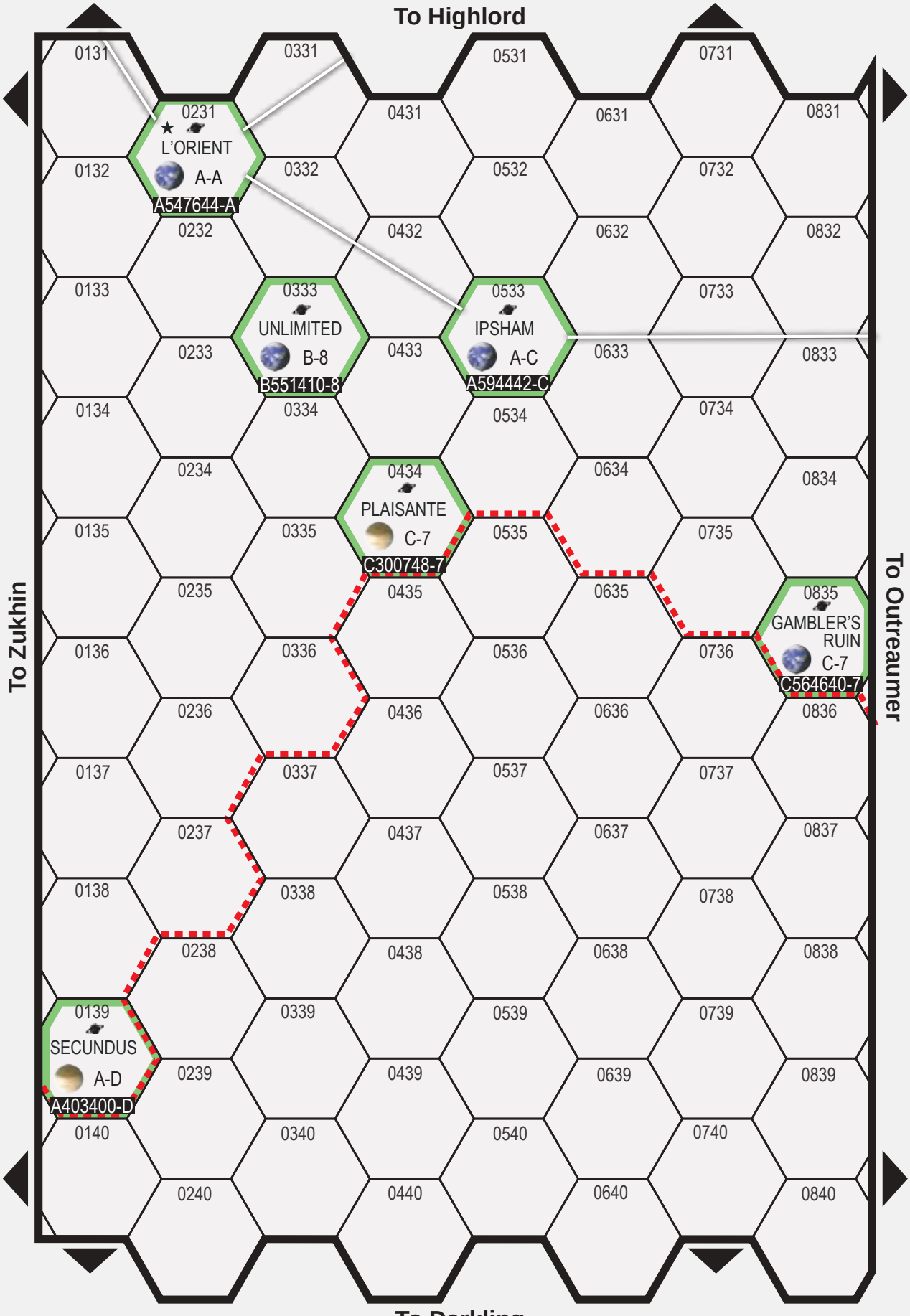
IPSHAM

UWP	A594442–C	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	5	8,000km
Atmosphere	9	Dense; Tainted
Hydrosphere	4	40%
Population	4	Tens of thousands
Government Type	4	Representative Democracy
Law Level	2	Portable energy weapons prohibited
Technology Level	C	Average Imperial

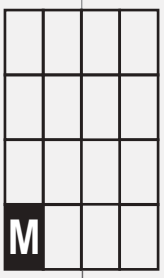
IPSHAM

Ipsham is a small, dense world with a thick atmosphere tainted by mildly radioactive volcanic dust. The world is going through a cycle of volcanism at present, making areas downwind of the main areas of activity hazardous to those operating without a mask. This is not much of a problem for the planetary population as they dwell in a single city using sealed buildings and routine decontamination for those venturing outside. Ipsham is a landgrab world, settled to create a territorial claim then never really expanded. It exists mainly to support the orbital highport and derives most of its income from

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Gambler's Ruin	0835	—	C564640-7	Ag Ni Ri	—	Imperium	G
Ipsham	0533	—	A594442-C	Ht Ni	—	Imperium	G
L'Orient	0231	N	A547644-A	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Plaisante	0434	—	C300748-7	Na Va	—	Imperium	G
Secundus	0139	—	A403400-D	Ht Ic Ni Va	—	Imperium	G
Unlimited	0333	—	B551410-8	Ni Po	—	Imperium	G



Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
★ Imperial Naval Base
Secure System
X-boat Route
Imperium Border
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)



LEY

SATYRESSIA SUBSECTOR

ships passing by. This is not a great deal but there is a jump-4 route into Outreaumer subsector from coreward and spinward.

Ipsham's wildlife is ferocious, especially several species of large predatory flying reptiles. These occasionally make a nuisance of themselves at the downport and city, and have to be chased off or killed by the world's small security force. Elsewhere the flyers are left to their own voracious devices. Until recently, the heavily forested lowlands and volcanic mountain ranges of Ipsham were of interest only to naturalists studying its highly aggressive ecosystem. However, rumours are now beginning to emerge of lost cities in the forests of Ipsham. These are said to have the characteristics of a human habitation but vastly predate the settlement of the region by the First or Second Imperium. It has been suggested that a colony of humans was set up on Ipsham by the Ancients and apparently survived for some time after the Ancients' Final War.

IPSHADACTYL

Despite the best efforts of the scientific community, Travellers have together grouped several species of flying reptile as Ipshadactyls. The name makes no sense except as a reference to the ancient Terran pterodactyl but it has entered the popular consciousness. Most ipshadactyls are large enough to be dangerous to a human, with a few species capable of upsetting a grav vehicle by landing on it. Open-topped air/rafts are a very poor idea on Ipsham as the local wildlife has learned to land on the sides or rear and peck at the crew, or even to grip the vehicle and flap their wings to destabilise it. Personnel have been known to be shaken out of a vehicle by this.

Ipshadactyls operate in flocks, often detaching a couple of individuals to cause a distraction whilst the rest position themselves for a violent, screaming swoop upon the victim. They are quite willing to attack small groups of humans in defence of their territory – and occasionally just out of orneriness. They nest in high places and will bring game to their chicks in gory pieces, returning to the kill to strip more meat out of it. This sometimes leads to a secondary kill, where some hapless scavenging creature is lured into the open by the apparent free meal awaiting.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Ipshadactyl	14	2m
Skills	Melee (natural) 2, Recon 1	
Attacks	Claws and Beak (2D)	
Traits	Flyer (Very Slow)	
Behaviour	Carnivore, Hunter	

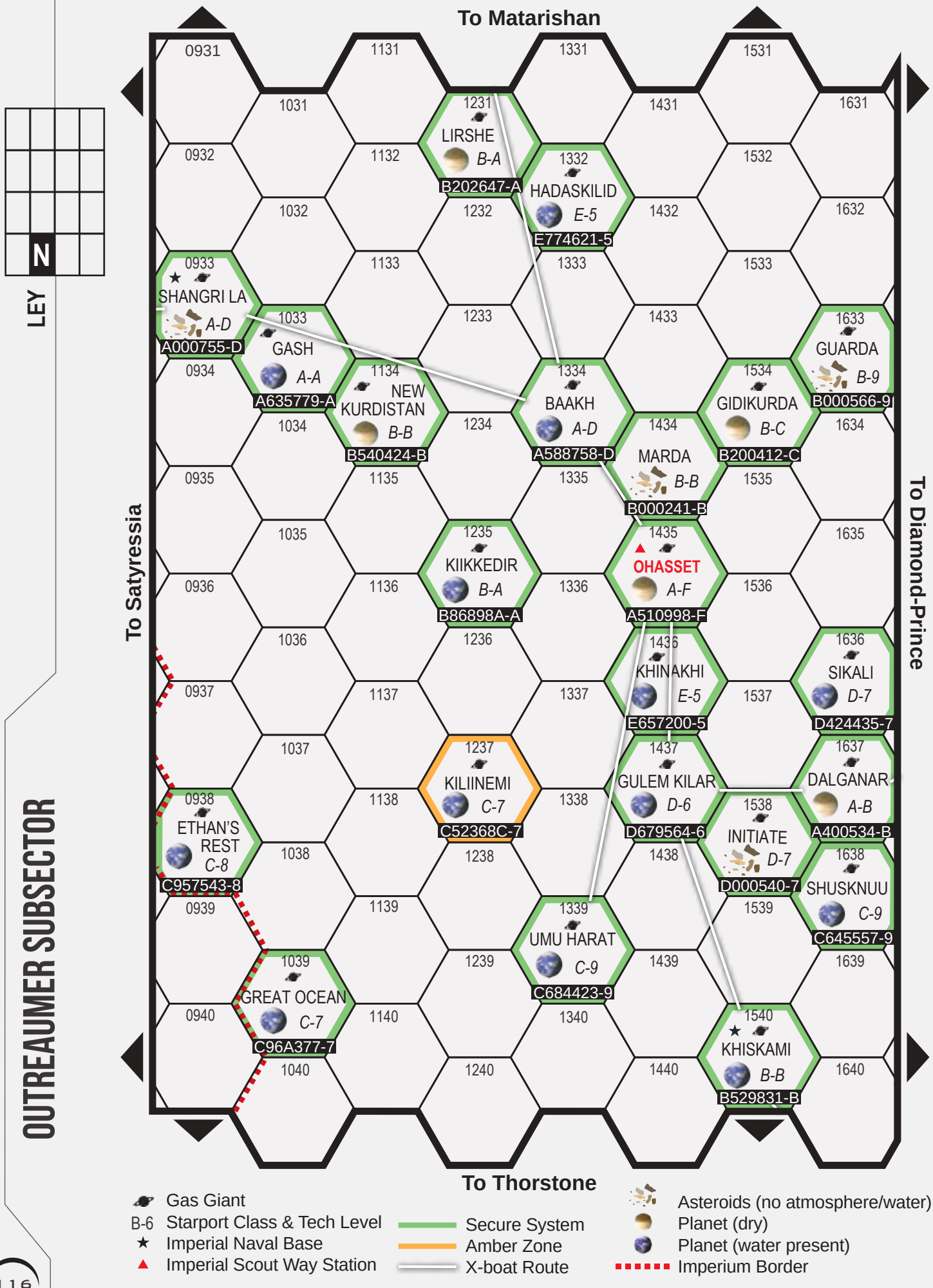
OUTREAUMER SUBSECTOR

Most of the 22 systems in Outreaumer lie on the Serpent Main, which stretches over into Diamond-Prince subsector. Tukera Lines has spent considerable sums on improving starports in the region around Ohasset and still dominates the major shipping lines. In the past 50 years however, it has faced increasingly strong competition from members of the Ley Sector Commercial Alliance which escalated almost to the point of a trade war in the 1090s. The situation has cooled off somewhat since then but rivalry is intense. One consequence of this is the presence of several flagship liners intended to impress all who behold them. More suited to the Core sector, these vessels lose money on every jump but their operators consider them a necessary tool in gaining control of the Serpent Main trade routes.

Outreaumer Subsector is the responsibility of the 267th Fleet, which has its headquarters at Khiskami. The few Imperial worlds in neighbouring Thorstone subsector have no fleet assigned to them, so the 267th takes responsibility for security in the region. It is assisted by a force of destroyers and sometimes a cruiser or two belonging to the sector fleet. These are based out of Shangri La. Additional security is provided by corporate vessels operated by Tukera Lines and members of the Ley Sector Commercial Alliance. Both are hostile to lawbreakers but many observers believe these ships are present more as a symptom of commercial tensions than to keep the peace.

This subsector is one of the four comprising a region of strategic interest loosely referred to as The Gate. It is of lesser importance than neighbouring Diamond-

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Baakh	1334	—	A588758-D	Ag Ht Ri	—	Imperium	G
Dalganar	1637	—	A400534-B	Ni Va	—	Imperium	G
Ethan's Rest	0938	—	C957543-8	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Gash	1033	—	A635779-A	—	—	Imperium	G
Gidikurda	1534	—	B200412-C	Ht Ni Va	—	Imperium	G
Great Ocean	1039	—	C96A377-7	Lo Wa	—	Imperium	G
Guarda	1633	—	B000566-9	As Ni	—	Imperium	G
Gulem Kilar	1437	—	D679564-6	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Hadaskilid	1332	—	E774621-5	Ag Lt Ni	—	Imperium	G
Initiate	1538	—	D000540-7	As Ni Va	—	Imperium	G
Khinakhi	1436	—	E657200-5	Lo Lt Ga	—	Imperium	G
Khiskami	1540	N	B529831-B	—	—	Imperium	G
Kiikkedir	1235	—	B86898A-A	Hi	—	Imperium	G
Kiliinemi	1237	—	C52368C-7	Na Ni Po	A	Imperium	G
Lirshe	1231	—	B202647-A	Ic Ni Va	—	Imperium	G
Marda	1434	—	B000241-B	As Lo Va	—	Imperium	—
New Kurdistan	1134	—	B540424-B	De He Ni Po	—	Imperium	G
Ohasset	1435	W	A510998-F	Hi Ht In	—	Imperium	G
Shangri La	0933	N	A000755-D	As Ht Na Va	—	Imperium	G
Shusknuu	1638	—	C645557-9	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Sikali	1636	—	D424435-7	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Umu Harat	1339	—	C684423-9	Ni	—	Imperium	G



OUTREAUMER SUBSECTOR

Prince subsector but the systems of its trailingward side will be a battleground if war with the K'Kree comes. The subsector's nobles routinely petition the archduke for more warships and better defences but the threat is far off and the archduke insists there will be time to prepare if the day finally comes.

GULEM KILAR

Situated close to the rimward Imperial border, Gulem Kilar is important only as a link on the x-boat network. The world was settled in the 680s as a landgrab and is still an Imperial Protectorate. It is ruled by an appointed planetary governor answering to the subsector duke at Ohasset. The population has remained steady since the original colonisation, which is hardly surprising. With very little industry and a local Tech Level of 6 there is not much to attract immigrants to Gulem Kilar.

The system's starport was earmarked for upgrade in order to support the x-boats and couriers deployed there and in the interim a standing deployment of x-boat tenders was instigated. Funding never emerged, so the tenders are still there. At any given time, there will be one tender actively engaged in x-boat support, one acting as a base for couriers serving the surrounding systems and one or more tenders present as backup or holding for deployment elsewhere. The system is erroneously noted as a scout base in some information sources but this is not the case. Scouts assigned to the system are stuck aboard their ships unless they choose to visit the rather basic Class D starport at the south pole of the mainworld.

GULEM KILAR

UWP	D679564–6	
Starport	D	Poor
Size	6	9,600km
Atmosphere	7	Standard; Tainted
Hydrosphere	9	90%
Population	5	Hundreds of thousands
Government Type	6	Captive Government/ Colony
Law Level	4	Light assault weapons prohibited
Technology Level	6	Nuclear Power

Gulem Kilar itself is hot and very wet. Its landscape is characterised by swamps and rainforests for the most part, with the population of some 600,000 clustered at the poles and in drier upland areas. Visitors describe Gulem Kilar as a vegetation-choked steam-bath, a description that is if anything far too kind. Other than the polar and upland settlements, the world is still largely unexplored and has very little industry. Occasional prospecting missions head out into the jungles or the deep oceans. Nothing of great value has ever been found but there are rumours of lost cities and great treasures in remote locations.

SHANGRI LA

Shangri La lies on the jump-4 and x-boat route into the subsector from spinward, making it an important link between the Domain capital and the rest of the Imperium. This has always been the case; Shangri La was settled expressly as a communications and trade link. The mainworld of the system is an asteroid belt. Although there are several iceball worlds in the system, the belt was chosen as the site of the port to allow use to be made of its extensive mineral deposits during construction. Before the port was constructed (in 902), the system was inhabited only by nomadic groups of belters.

Shangri La Starport is an impressive A class facility situated on a large planetoid on the edge of the belt. The port is subsidised by the Imperial Colonial Office (ICO), which intended to withdraw its funding once the system was capable of supporting its port. This never happened and the necessity of keeping the x-boat route open requires continued support. Little money is made from trade due to the port's location and local industries are not significant.

An ore processing plant at the starport ships out large quantities of mostly low quality ore. The corporate mining platforms generally produce better output but the profits go to the corporations rather than the mainworld's industries. Some income is produced by the shipyards; however, they are small and specialised. Shangri La mainly builds x-boat components and vessels for the mining trade. Special orders, which generally means anything other than x-boats and seekers, can take an inordinately long time to complete due to retooling requirements.

Lacking any real industrial capability, the Shangri La system cannot support its tech base without imported equipment. Despite this, the inhabitants enjoy a TL13 standard of living but the port has the air more of a place of work than a homeworld. Ninety million

SHANGRI LA

UWP	A000755–D	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	0	Asteroid Belt
Atmosphere	0	No atmosphere
Hydrosphere	0	Desert World
Population	7	Tens of millions
Government Type	5	Feudal Technocracy
Law Level	5	Personal concealable weapons prohibited
Technology Level	D	Above Average Imperial

people live and work in habitats on the planetoid or scattered throughout the belt. Many are employed in the port or its associated starship construction yards. Of the rest, the vast majority are involved in the asteroid mining industry, mainly as employees of Sternmetal Horizons, LIC, which operates several vast mobile asteroid-gutting platforms.

Government is by feudal technocracy. The ruling council is drawn from representatives of various technical branches such as the starship environmental and the mining engineers. A substantial minority of the population are descendants of the original belters. They feel disenfranchised and there is some friction between them and the newcomers. Independent belter ships still work the belt, although they are gradually being edged out.

THE IMPERIAL COLONIAL OFFICE

ICO was created at a time when colony operations were commonplace. It was to serve as a governing body for colonial claims and to oversee the settlement and development of official colonies. Over time, this role faded into near-insignificance as almost every promising colony site has been settled. In the case where worlds or parts of worlds are reserved for future development, ICO is charged with overseeing them but the decision to open up a world is made jointly with the Scout Service and regional authorities.

The Colonial Office has become a bureau of the backwaters, providing development funds to minor worlds or sending assistance when one suffers a setback. This is more about supporting the overall economic wellbeing of the Imperium than advancing the cause of any one world. Problems that might affect trade, such as a damaged starport after a disaster of some kind, are the concern of the Imperium as a whole. Development of a world's economy is its own business unless it also benefits the regional economy.

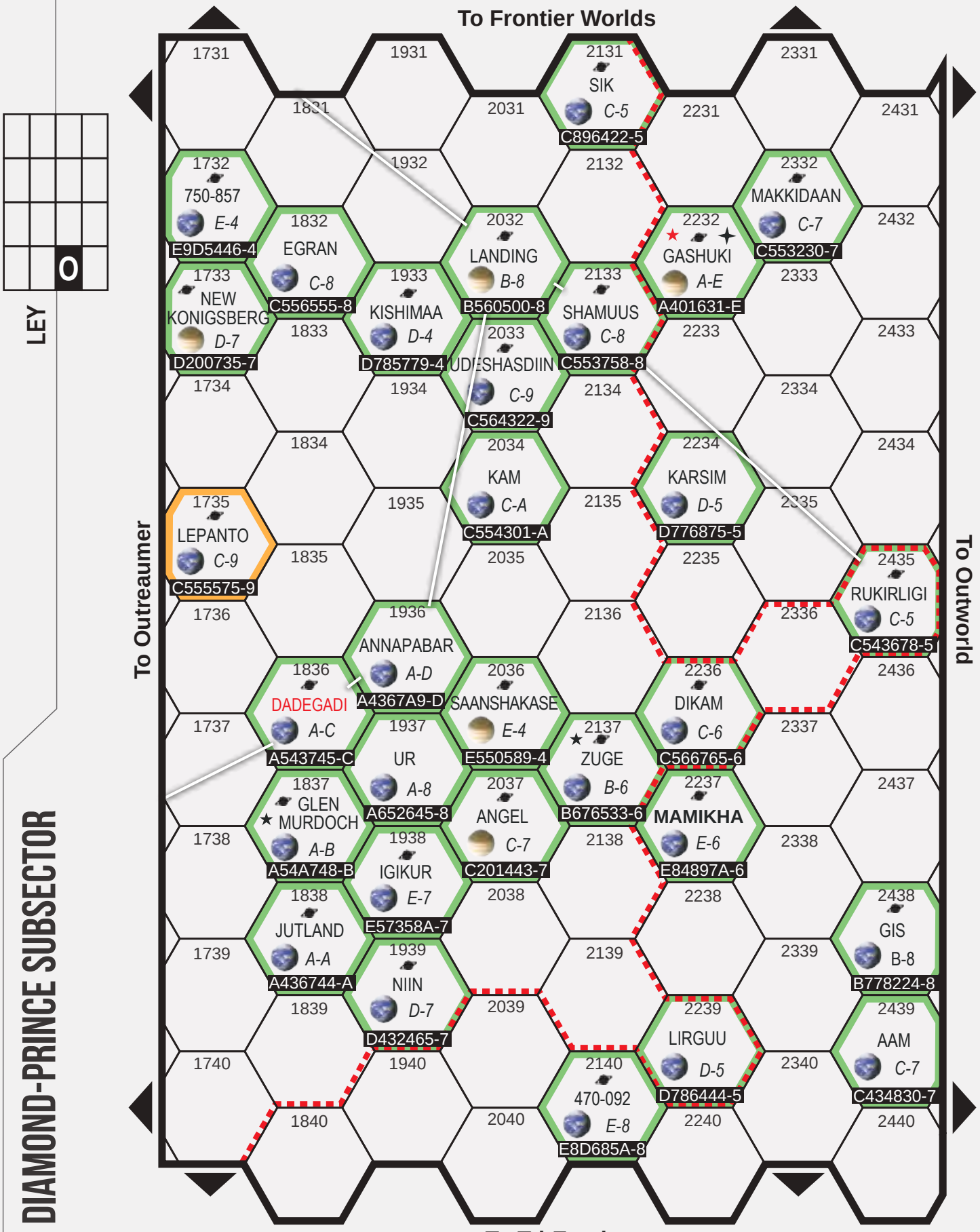
For example, ICO might provide funding and assistance to a mid-tech world if an increased Tech Level and bigger industrial base makes it a better market for offworld goods or a source of something other nearby worlds might need. The Colonial Office will make only a token effort, if it does anything at all, to assist a world that simply wants to be more prosperous. This is an underlying factor in the Imperial psyche – it exists to foster free trade to the benefit of everyone but what local governments do about the opportunities provided is up to them. Cynics might say the ICO exists mainly to ensure the poorer worlds remain prosperous enough to enrich the wealthy ones.

In The Gate, ICO has been tasked with assisting local worlds – but always to the benefit of the Imperium. Its personnel and assets can be encountered assisting with projects that improve the flow of trans-border trade or expand a market. When there is no obvious financial benefit to the Imperium, the project is almost certainly being backed for political reasons. This is sometimes aligned with the long-term hardening of The Gate mission but may also be a general relations-improvement project of the sort ongoing on most frontiers. Sometimes this leads to an expansion of the borders but even if it does not, it creates a zone of friendly and economically dependent states along the frontier.

DIAMOND-PRINCE SUBSECTOR

The 30 star systems of Diamond-Prince lie mainly on the Serpent Main or within the Annapabar Cluster. This was previously designated the Imperial Trade Cluster but that was a project name rather than an astrographic designation and is used less often today than previously. The heavy investment that accompanied the creation of the ITC resulted in several excellent starports being opened but the economies of their associated worlds never expanded to match. Nevertheless, Diamond-Prince and the Annapabar Cluster in particular are important as the arrival and exit point for most of the trade headed into Gateway and Glimmerdrift Reaches.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
470-092	2140	—	E8D6854-8	—	—	Imperium	G
750-857	1732	—	E9D5446-4	Lt Ni	—	Imperium	G
Aam	2439	—	C434830-7	Ph	—	—	—
Angel	2037	—	C201443-7	Ic Ni Va	—	Imperium	G
Annapabar	1936	—	A4367A9-D	Ht	—	Imperium	—
Dadegadi	1836	—	A543745-C	Ht Po	—	Imperium	G
Dikam	2236	—	C566765-6	Ag Ri	—	Imperium	G
Egran	1832	—	C556555-8	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	—
Gashuki	2232	NM	A401631-E	Ht Ic Ni Va	—	—	G
Gis	2438	—	B778224-8	Lo	—	—	G
Glen Murdoch	1837	N	A54A748-B	Wa Pi	—	Imperium	G
Igikur	1938	—	E57358A-7	Ni	—	Imperium	G
Jutland	1838	—	A436744-A	—	—	Imperium	G
Kam	2034	—	C554301-A	Lo	—	Imperium	—
Karsim	2234	—	D776875-5	Lt	—	—	—
Kishimaa	1933	—	D785779-4	Ag Ga Ri Lt	—	Imperium	G
Landing	2032	—	B560500-8	De Ni	—	Imperium	G
Lepanto	1735	—	C555575-9	Ag Ni	A	Imperium	G
Lirguu	2239	—	D786444-5	Ga Lt Ni	—	Imperium	—
Makkidaan	2332	—	C553230-7	Lo Po	—	Imperium	G
Mamikha	2237	—	E84897A-6	Hi In	—	—	G
New Konigsberg	1733	—	D200735-7	Na Va	—	Imperium	G
Niin	1939	—	D432465-7	Ni Po	—	Imperium	G
Rukirligi	2435	—	C543678-5	Lt Ni Po	—	Imperium	G
Saanshakase	2036	—	E550589-4	De Lt Ni Po	—	Imperium	G
Shamuus	2133	—	C553758-8	Po	—	Imperium	G
Sik	2131	—	C896422-5	Lt Ni	—	Imperium	G
Udeshasdiin	2033	—	C564322-9	Lo	—	Imperium	G
Ur	1937	—	A652645-8	Ni Po	—	Imperium	—
Zuge	2137	N	B676533-6	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G



DIAMOND-PRINCE SUBSECTOR

Diamond-Prince is the most strategically important of the four making up The Gate. The most likely path of a K'Kree advance would be through Outworld into Diamond-Prince then spinward-coreward towards the Great Ley Cluster. In addition to any strategic considerations, astrography would incline an invasion force to move in this manner. Given the predictability of such a move and the prevailing opinion that it is inevitable, calls for the fortification of Diamond-Prince are common.

At present, a system of pivot fortresses is envisioned. Some worlds will be hardened and supplied with heavy defences, creating safe havens for mobile fleets to operate on interior lines against an invader. Even if the fleet is withdrawn – or never deployed for lack of ships – the pivot systems can be used to harass enemy supply lines. This is not to the liking of the Gateway Wall adherents who want a solid line of fortress systems, several parsecs deep, right across The Gate. Ideally, the fortresses will be in newly-annexed systems in Outworld and Sydymic subsectors. This is unlikely to happen.

The subsector is the responsibility of the 266th Fleet, which has its headquarters at Zuge. Elements of the sector fleet are based at Glen Murdoch. These are mostly large destroyers and cruisers which operate beyond the border. A standing deployment of one BatRon and one CruRon is also maintained at Annapabar but as these ships are the nearest sector fleet assets to the seat of the archduke one or more of them is usually detached for some important errand, with another showing the Imperial flag in Outworld subsector. Additional security is provided by the archduke's personal forces, which are based at Annapabar.

ANNAPABAR

Annapabar orbits at the outer limit of the life zone, resulting in a very low surface temperature. This and the very thin atmosphere means most surface water is in fact ice. The great majority of the planetary surface is glacier or bare, lifeless, rock. Only in the depths of the oceans is there much life. This is generally of a hardy, cold-resistant and primitive nature. Unsurprisingly, before 991 Annapabar was almost entirely uninhabited.

In 991, the new Archduke of Gateway made the momentous – and rather sudden – decision to move the Domain capital to Annapabar. The system also became the subsector capital at that time. An enormous orbital city was built to house the starport and the

ANNAPABAR

UWP	A4367A9–D	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	4	6,400km
Atmosphere	3	Very thin
Hydrosphere	6	60%
Population	7	Tens of millions
Government Type	A	Charismatic Dictator
Law Level	9	Possession of weapons outside the home prohibited
Technology Level	D	Above Average Imperial

Domain administration, with associated settlements and industry planetside. The population expanded to around 20 million and remained stable thereafter.

Moving the Domain capital to Annapabar was one of the most controversial decisions Archduke Erechs ever made. The declaration of the Imperial Trade Cluster, which was simultaneous, also raised eyebrows – mainly due to the vast sums spent on starports orbiting rather unimportant worlds. However, the Cluster did achieve its primary aim. Trade into Gateway sector was greatly expanded, with most ships going through Annapabar Highport. This generated a great deal of revenue which largely justified the starport-building programme.

Annapabar was set up as a fortress as well as a capital. The orbital highport has a large naval quarter which, whilst not officially a naval base, can serve as one. There are also small installations in the outsystem which can support system defence craft and destroyer-sized naval ships. The mainworld itself has an impressive array of ground defences, including deep-site meson guns. Whilst hidden, some installations such as the Planetary Aerospace Defence missile bases scattered around the globe are quite obvious. A visitor might get the impression the whole of The Gate was similarly fortified, which suits the Imperium.

The cornerstone of the defences, at the time they were installed, was a purpose-built 750,000 ton monitor. This was no converted planetoid; it was a

true naval ship built in a dock created specifically to accommodate it. Crewed jointly by the Archduke's Huscarles (personal forces) and the Navy, this vessel is named *Resolution*. She is a century old now but has been refitted twice and can be expected to serve for many decades more. Most of the time *Resolution* cruises close to the mainworld, where both friends and potential enemies can see her.

Annapabar receives visitors and ambassadors from across the region, notably embassies from the Galian Federation and the Khuur League, and a trade delegation of Hivers from Gashuki. Officials from Phoniwt are also usually present, although the internal politics of that powerful world are such that individuals are constantly being recalled and replaced. A steady stream of jump-3 trade ships pushes out through The Gate, along with navy cruisers and intelligence-gathering vessels. For many visitors, Annapabar is the furthest into the Imperium they ever will go and a lot of money is spent on creating a good and slightly daunting impression.

GASHUKI

Gashuki is a rockball world located almost at the very tip of the Serpent Main just outside Imperial territory. It was never of any importance until a Hiver Trade Mission arrived, followed by others. Although the world's hereditary oligarchy is still officially in control, it is widely assumed that Gashuki is ruled by the Hivers. Ostensibly their presence is intended to facilitate trade and cultural relations between the Imperium and the Hive Federation but there is much speculation about what they are really up to.

The trade mission is genuine and makes a profit for those involved, but it is part of a larger plan. The Hivers are fascinated by just about everything but particularly the psychology and motivations of sentient species. Hivers have a deep-seated fear of violence and this translates to a need to understand their neighbours so the Hive Federation can be prepared for an attack or other conflict. Many Hiver Manipulations are based around gaining an idea of what a given species will do in a situation.

The upsets in the Domain of Gateway a century ago were a magnet for Hiver researchers, who were both frightened of what might happen and fascinated to see what will result when one human leader is deposed in favour of another. Some Hivers actively tried to manipulate the outcome of the struggle between the two archducal factions, whether to obtain a favourable outcome or see if a manipulation on such a grand scale can be done. They have almost certainly continued to influence events, or tried to, in Ley ever since.

GASHUKI

UWP	A401631–E	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	4	6,400km
Atmosphere	0	No atmosphere
Hydrosphere	1	10%
Population	6	Millions
Government Type	3	Self-Perpetuating Oligarchy
Law Level	1	Body pistols, explosives, and poison gas prohibited
Technology Level	E	Above Average Imperial

However, this was a secondary aim; one that became possible due to outside circumstances. The real reason the Hivers came to Gashuki is twofold. First, they wish to study the Sydites. It would seem the Sydites are ideal targets for manipulation given their susceptibility to influence. Perhaps they can be made into allies for the Hive Federation or puppets for the Federation, carrying out instructions given from a safe distance. The Hivers' intentions towards the Sydites are unclear and it is likely they vary from Hiver-to-Hiver. What is clear is that the interest is there, although naturally the Hivers of Gashuki are not making it very obvious.

The other great concern for the Hivers is related to the K'Kree or more specifically, the Lords of Thunder. The Hive Federation is concerned about their possible expansion. They have shown an interest in Crucis Margin sector, where at least one human state has assumed a submissive stance towards them. This frightens the Hivers, who foresee the day when the Lords of Thunder begin to encroach on Hiver space and perhaps even redress the defeat inflicted upon them by the Hivers.

The most effective way to counter a threat like the Lords of Thunder, the Hivers know, is by influence from afar. Ideally, the Hivers can work through third or even fourth parties, persuading others to recognise the threat posed by the K'Kree expansions and to bolster the will and the defences of the threatened human states

in Gateway and Crucis Margin. Even if this merely distracts the K'Kree for a few decades, it is worth doing. It may be possible to create resentment among the Lords of Thunder toward those the Hivers are manipulating into opposing them. K'Kree who are angry with humans are less likely to attack Hivers.

Therefore, the Hivers are in human space for several reasons. They are of course also interested in trade and studying humans and other species. The Hivers also hope to create a counterbalance to the K'Kree by fostering the mindset among humans that the K'Kree are a dangerous threat. Whether the Imperium begins to actively oppose the K'Kree, or simply becomes predisposed to help the Hivers if they are attacked by the Lords of Thunder in the future, the work is worth doing. Naturally, the Hivers are happy to fiddle with, meddle in and generally stick their sensory appendages into anything else that may be going on the region.

LEPANTO

Lepanto is a mid-sized world with a thin atmosphere and moderate expanses of water which was colonised during the Rule of Man. Never a large colony, the remaining population was tripled by the arrival of Imperial colonists in 720 who integrated among the existing population with surprisingly little friction. Shortly before the outbreak of the Solomani Rim War, pro-Solomani agitation spilled over into acts of violence against non-Solomani Imperial citizens on the planet. A soft approach failed to secure any useful results and as the violence increased, steadily firmer measures were taken.

Full intervention took place in 992 after the Solomani blockade runner *Liberty* was intercepted by INS *Urskii Gla* with a cargo hold full of weaponry intended for

LEPANTO

UWP	C555575–9	
Starport	C	Routine
Size	5	8,000km
Atmosphere	5	Thin
Hydrosphere	5	50%
Population	5	Hundreds of thousands
Government Type	7	Balkanisation
Law Level	5	Personal concealable weapons prohibited
Technology Level	9	Anti-Gravity

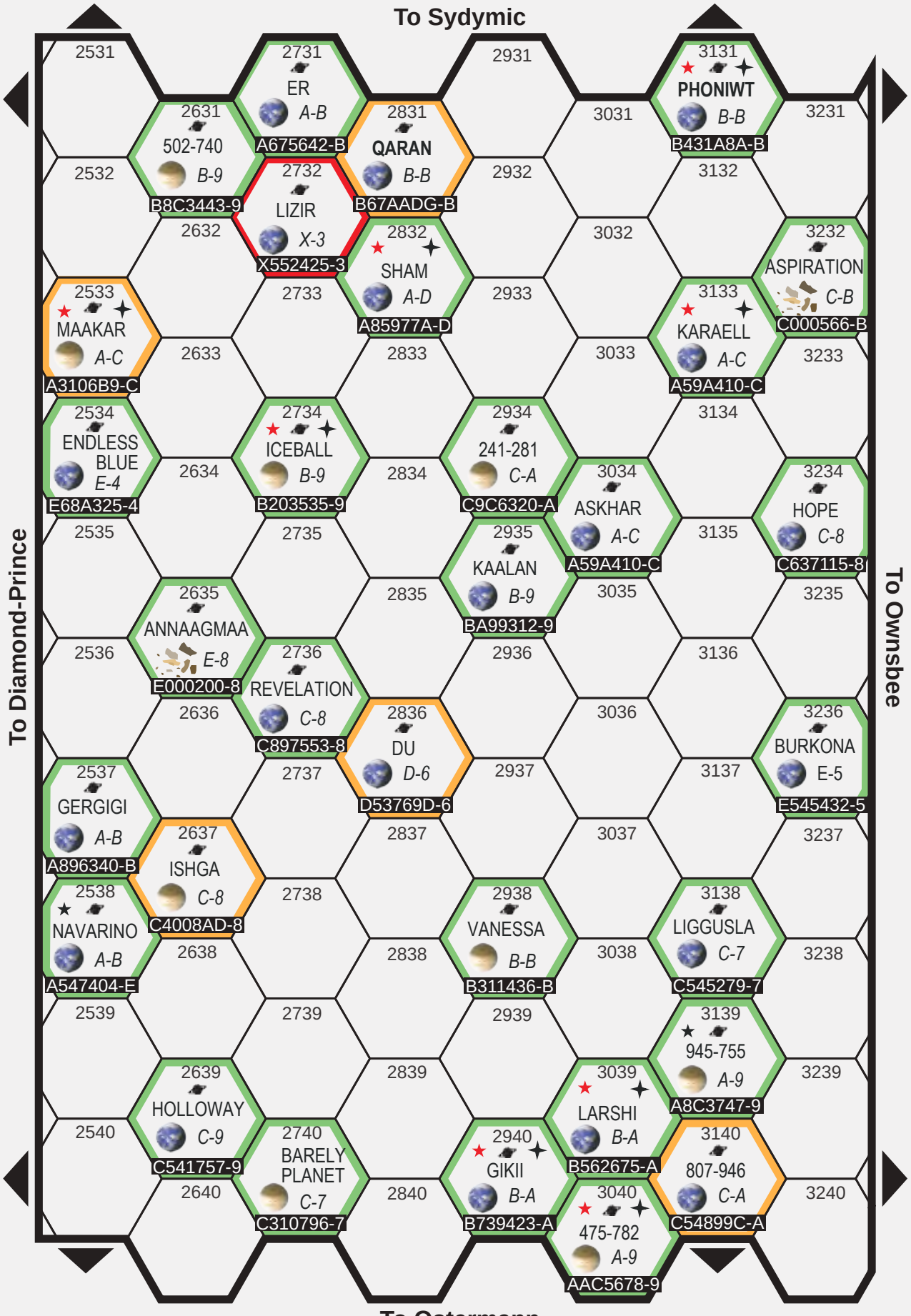
Solomani sympathisers. Investigations proved that several such cargoes had already been delivered and Solomani advisors were planetside, training guerrillas and terrorists to use the weapons. The intervention was welcomed by frightened Imperial loyalists and was a success, despite stubborn resistance from the hopelessly outgunned rebels. Martial law was imposed in 996 and not lifted until 1015. Insurrection gradually died down after the end of the Solomani Rim War but Lepanto has remained troubled ever since.

Over time, the troublemakers on Lepanto have moved from being pro-Solomani to more generally anti-Imperial. Among smugglers and less ethical merchants it is an open secret that there is good money to be had running people in and out of Lepanto. There is always a market for arms and military equipment on a world like this but cargoes of weaponry or small combat units are sometimes shipped out. It is thought Lepanto is a stronghold for the Free Peoples' Alliance, although attempts by intelligence agencies to obtain hard proof rarely produce meaningful results.

Typically, the situation on Lepanto quiets down for a few years at a time before a small group manages to trigger a wider backlash, which in turn results in a resurgence of violence. Restrictions on the ownership of weapons are routinely ignored and enforced in a patchy manner at best. Lepanto has been an Amber Zone for over a century and is likely to remain so, despite the efforts of various special envoys from the archduke and mercenary forces tasked with pacifying the world.

OUTWORLD SUBSECTOR

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
241-281	2934	—	C9C6320-A	Fl Lo	—	—	G
475-782	3040	NM	AAC5678-9	Fl Ni	—	—	G
502-740	2631	—	B8C3443-9	Fl Ni	—	Imperium	G
807-946	3140	—	C54899C-A	Hi In	A	—	G
945-755	3139	N	A8C3747-9	Fl	—	Imperium	G
Annaagmaa	2635	—	E000200-8	As Lo Va	—	Imperium	G
Askhar	3034	—	A59A410-C	Ht Ni Wa	—	Imperium	G
Aspiration	3232	—	C000566-B	As Ni Va	—	—	G
Barely Planet	2740	—	C310796-7	Na Pi	—	Imperium	—
Burkona	3236	—	E545432-5	Lt Ni	—	Imperium	G
Du	2836	—	D53769D-6	Ni	A	—	G
Endless Blue	2534	—	E68A325-4	Lo Lt Wa	—	Imperium	G
Er	2731	—	A675642-B	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Gergigi	2537	—	A896340-B	Lo	—	Imperium	G
Gikii	2940	NM	B739423-A	Ni	—	—	G
Holloway	2639	—	C541757-9	He Po	—	Imperium	G
Hope	3234	—	C637115-8	Lo	—	—	G
Iceball	2734	NM	B203535-9	Ic Ni Va	—	—	G
Ishga	2637	—	C4008AD-8	Na Va	A	Imperium	G
Kaalan	2935	—	BA99312-9	Lo	—	Imperium	G
Karaell	3133	NM	B555750-B	Ag	—	—	—
Larshi	3039	NM	B562675-A	Ni Ri	—	—	—
Liggusla	3138	—	C545279-7	Lo	—	Imperium	G
Lizir	2732	—	X552425-3	Lt Ni Po	R	Imperium	G
Maakar	2533	NM	A3106B9-C	Ht Ni	A	—	G
Navarino	2538	N	A547404-E	Ht Ni	—	Imperium	G
Phoniwt	3131	NM	B431A8A-B	Hi Po	—	—	G
Qaran	2831	—	B67AADG-B	Hi In Wa	A	—	G
Revelation	2736	—	C897553-8	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Sham	2832	NM	A85977A-D	Ht	—	—	—
Vanessa	2938	—	B311436-B	Ic Ni	—	Imperium	G


To Sydymic
To Diamond-Prince
To Ownsbee
To Ostermann
2531
2731
ER
A-B
A675642-B
2931
3131
PHONIWT
B-B
B431A8A-B
2631
502-740
B-9
B8C3443-9
2831
QARAN
B-B
B67AADG-B
3031
3231
2532
2732
LIZIR
X-3
X552425-3
2932
3132
2632
2832
SHAM
A-D
A85977A-D
3032
3232
ASPIRATION
C-B
C000566-B
2533
MAAKAR
A-C
A3106B9-C
2733
2933
3133
KARAELL
A-C
A59A410-C
3033
3233
2633
2833
2534
ENDLESS BLUE
E-4
E68A325-4
2734
ICEBALL
B-9
B203535-9
2934
241-281
C-A
C9C6320-A
3134
2634
2834
3034
ASKHAR
A-C
A59A410-C
3234
HOPE
C-8
C637115-8
2535
2735
2935
KAALAN
B-9
BA99312-9
3135
2635
ANNAAGMAA
E-8
E000200-8
2835
3035
3235
2536
2736
REVELATION
C-8
C897553-8
2936
3136
2636
2836
DU
D-6
D53769D-6
3036
3236
BURKONA
E-5
E545432-5
2537
GERGIGI
A-B
A896340-B
2737
2937
3137
2637
ISHGA
C-8
C4008AD-8
2837
3037
3237
2538
NAVARINO
A-B
A547404-E
2738
2938
VANESSA
B-B
B311436-B
3138
LIGGUSLA
C-7
C545279-7
2638
2838
3038
3238
2539
2739
2939
3139
945-755
A-9
A8C3747-9
2639
HOLLOWAY
C-9
C541757-9
2839
3039
LARSHI
B-A
B562675-A
3239
2540
2740
BARELY PLANET
C-7
C310796-7
2940
GIKII
B-A
B739423-A
3140
807-946
C-A
C54899C-A
2640
2840
3040
475-782
A-9
AAC5678-9
3240
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Imperial Naval Base
Other Naval Base
Secure System
Amber Zone
Red Zone
Asteroids (no atmosphere/water)
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)
Military Base/Garrison

The 31 star systems of Outworld lie beyond the Imperial border, although some are client states. The Khuur League, the Galian Federation and the world of Phoniwt all vie for market shares and political influence throughout the subsector. There is no assigned numbered fleet as Outworld lies beyond the remit of subsector fleets but the Ley Sector Fleet is active in the area.

Outworld is considered part of The Gate and efforts are constantly made to align worlds with Imperial interests. Success has been patchy, largely due to an inconsistent and underfunded effort. Much of the money spent on improving relations comes from those involved in the Gateway Project and their first priority is profit rather than allegiance. This is seen as a necessary evil by the Imperial authorities – better some progress now than massive effort in the future.

The main trade routes coming out of Imperial space depart the Annapabar Cluster heading either directly trailingward towards the Viyard Concourse by way of the Ownsbee subsector or coreward-trailingward, either through Phoniwt or bypassing it depending on the current situation. Wise captains are always on the alert for news from Phoniwt and willing to change their plans accordingly.

PHONIWT

Phoniwt, with its 60-billion population, is a small, tidally-locked world orbiting the gas giant Kaske Huul at the very edge of the life zone. Most surface water is frozen into spectacular glaciers near the poles. The rest of the planet is chilly desert whose very thin atmosphere is not sufficient for life more complex than moss. Despite its unappealing nature, Phoniwt is a thriving metropolis. The majority of the population live on the 'out-facing' side, away from the gas giant, in a single immense underground city. The 'facing side' has a few mining and industrial communities but is rather hazardous due to occasional radiation bursts from Kaske Huul itself.

Phoniwt was settled in the last days of the Rule of Man and was for a time an important naval support base whose industry supplied spares and parts for naval squadrons assigned to the region. When the Long Night fell, the world retained its status as an important refit centre and became something of a boom world even as interstellar civilisation fell apart. An important trade nexus and starship-repair centre, Phoniwt survived the Long Night as the centre of a trade alliance, now long broken-up, and has always been an important port for trade into and out of Gateway. The world was annexed by the Sydymic Empire on two occasions but won its independence both times, the latter just before the Imperium/Sydymic war.

PHONIWT

UWP	B431A8A–B	
Starport	B	Good
Size	4	6,400km
Atmosphere	3	Very thin
Hydrosphere	1	10%
Population	A	Tens of billions
Government Type	8	Civil Service Bureaucracy
Law Level	A	Weapon possession prohibited
Technology Level	B	Lower Average Imperial

Phoniwt, typically of heavily-overpopulated worlds, has strict laws. Government is bureaucratic and slow-moving, and is dominated by several major factions. The Phoniwt Naval Service has considerable influence over its own budgets, while other industrial concerns are important. However, the real power rests, oddly enough, with the University of Phoniwt. The University business school provides the vast majority of personnel to government offices and over many years has come to directly influence them. This control is currently challenged by the People's Centre Party, which has many popular figures but little coherent strategy.

The result of this political infighting is considerable delays in getting anything done and the bringing-to-bear of bureaucratic influence on every trivial topic as the various factions manoeuvre for position. Politics so pervades daily life that most citizens see themselves as players in 'the game'. The use of influence is an accepted means of getting things done in normal life. Politics of this sort, which takes place at every level from grand policy to grocery shopping, is the most popular recreational activity on the planet.

Phoniwt remains an important trade and industrial centre despite its internal wrangling, and merchants come from across the subsector to trade here. Phoniwt maintains trade links through Far Portal to the Galian Federation, providing the main route for trade

between the Imperium and Gateway. Many Phoniwt-based corporations are beginning to make their influence felt beyond the local region. Naturally, the Imperium sees Phoniwt as a potential asset but has yet to make any progress towards client status. This is partly due to the popular distaste for being told what to do by outsiders, and partly because nobody can agree on anything for very long.

WORLDSHIP *ANNAAGMAA*

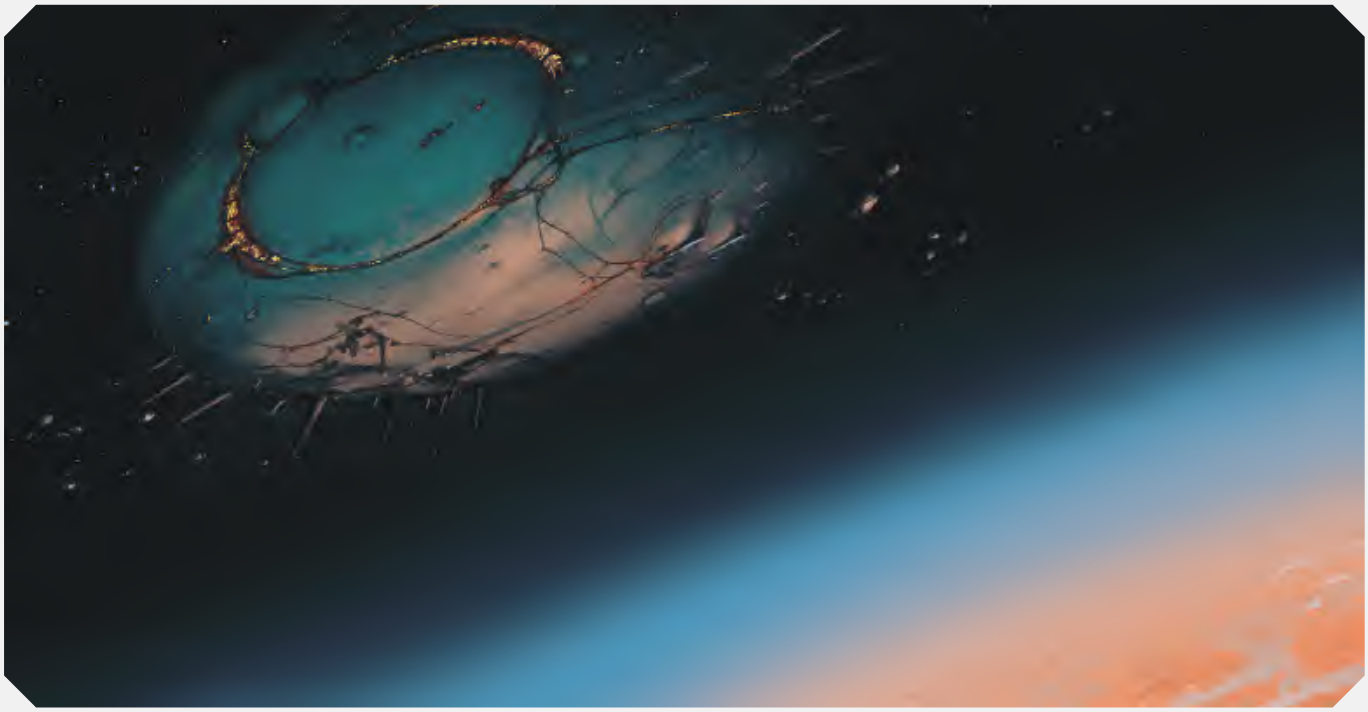
The Wanderer name for this vessel is unknown but it is currently closest to the Annaagmaa system so is generally known by that name. The worldship is a large planetoid fitted with sublight drives, crawling at low velocity in a generally spinward direction. Encounters with Wanderers from this ship are possible anywhere within a radius of fifteen parsecs. Travellers are unlikely to encounter the worldship itself unless they happen to jump to the right spot in deep space. It is possible they could find the worldship by befriending an expedition of Wanderers whose home it is.

Worldship *Annaagmaa* was one of the last worldships out of the homeworld before its destruction. Over-populated, half-finished and underpowered, it never achieved the high sublight speeds required for a long journey. The worldship coasted out of the home system during the last phase of the attacks, unobserved by the Vilani warships. Some of its drive systems failed within the first ten years, making deceleration and turnaround a painfully slow process, but eventually the worldship reached a point in Gateway and went into orbit around an uninhabited planet. Descending to the surface, the survivors made a life for themselves as best they could and gradually clawed their way back into space.

The arrival of human settlers on their new homeworld was a shock to the Wanderers but there was no genocide. The two populations, neither of them large, ignored one another most of the time. As the human presence grew, the Wanderers became uncomfortable and they longed for their old home. Tales of the destruction of the Vilani Imperium encouraged them and they began a great project. They would return home!

Long years had eroded memories and hard data had been lost but the Wanderers were able to figure out a general area. They traded almost everything they had as a civilisation for a few jump drives and enough spares to fix up their worldship, eventually setting out to spinward. The worldship is entering the old home region, and the priests aboard are sure they can sense their home somewhere ahead.

The worldship is directed roughly at Kam, in Diamond-Prince subsector. The ship is decelerating slowly, and should arrive in about 550–600 years. Kam is not the final destination, merely a waypoint. The Wanderers plan to enter the system and set up a stable orbit. From there they will search, finally starting up their drives again when they are sure they have found their way home.



GATEWAY SECTOR

Gateway is a very different place to Ley. This is partly the result of astrography. Its star patterns make the creation of large states difficult and have impeded Imperial expansion into the sector. There are few mains or major clusters. Instead, Gateway is characterised by a scattering of small clusters and individual systems, separated by two or three parsec rifts. Navigation is somewhat more restricted than in areas with many mains. The primary astrographic feature of the sector is the Lesser Rift, which separates the coreward end of the sector from neighbouring Ley.

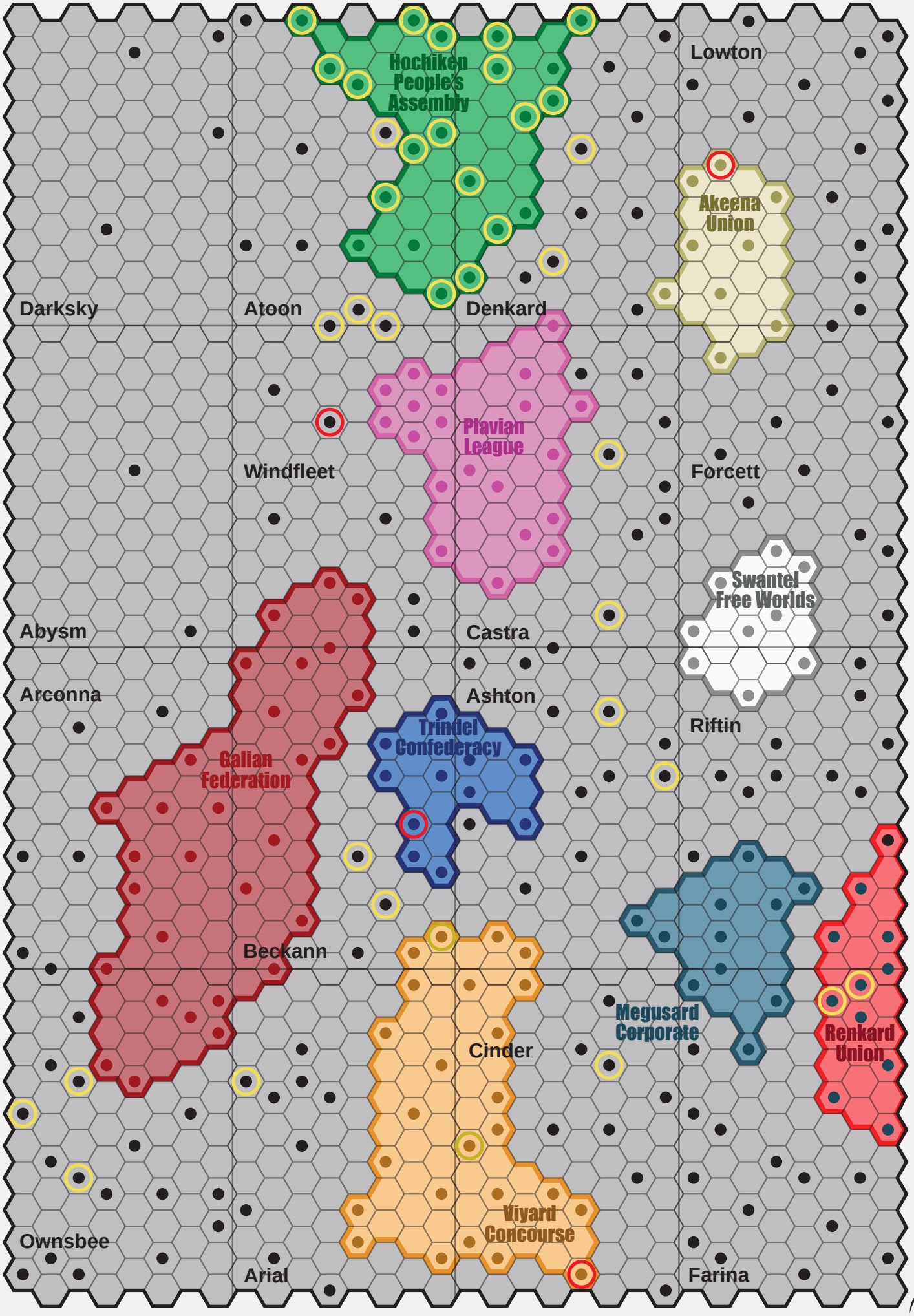
Gateway contains several major interstellar polities and many minor or one-world states. It sits uncomfortably between the Imperium to spinward and the Two Thousand Worlds to trailing. Influenced by both (and listed in Imperial data as a collection of client states) the majority of worlds are in fact stubbornly independent or subject only to local alliances and trade pacts. There is no sector capital as such. Gateway Prime comes close, mainly because of its importance in interstellar trade.

Neither the Ziru Sirka nor the Rule of Man reached Gateway in strength, although enterprising colonists, mainly of Solomani descent, spread throughout the region in the early years of the Long Night. The first human colonies in the region were most likely on Tharver, Bremen and Salur, around -1700. The first definite date in human history in the region is -1511, the founding of a colony on Carlton. However, it is known that by this time there was already considerable interstellar traffic in the region.

The human people of Gateway, as far as any generalisation is valid, value personal freedom, self-reliance and individualism. This is one reason the region is so fractious. There are several K'Kree populated worlds within the sector. Some are entirely K'Kree, while others have a mixed population of humans, K'Kree and sometimes others. In some areas this has led to greater understanding and tolerance; in most it simply creates opportunities for conflicts of interest and even open warfare. Several other species are present, including some small enclaves of Vargr and the odd Wanderer worldship.

Some states actively support piracy as a political or economic tool, although Imperial interests are working to curb this trend. The biggest threats to local stability come from the Lords of Thunder to trailing and the Hochiken People's Assembly to coreward. Both are known to be expansionistic and are considered a threat by their neighbours as they may be engaging in covert action to improve their situation. A number of one-world states are also attempting to secure their position or enhance it.

The Imperium has a certain amount of influence in Gateway but this is mainly confined to the spinward subsectors. The Galian Federation, while friendly to the Imperium, acts as a buffer between Imperial space and the rest of the sector. It is likely the K'Kree have agents at work in the region, whilst influence from the Hivers or Solomani Confederation is minimal. Piracy and privateering are relatively common in Gateway, with some states having a long tradition of such practices. Interstellar trade is therefore rather hazardous even without the complications imposed by relations between the states of Gateway.


Hochiken People's Assembly
Lowton
Akeena Union
Darksky
Atoon
Denkard
Plavian League
Windfleet
Forcett
Swantel Free Worlds
Abysm
Castra
Arconna
Ashton
Riftin
Trindel Confederacy
Galian Federation
Beckann
Megusard Corporate
Renkard Union
Cinder
Viyard Concourse
Ownsbee
Arial
Farina

DARKSKY SUBSECTOR

The main astrographic feature of Gateway is the tip of the Lesser Rift which dominates the spinward-coreward corner of the sector. There are four star systems in this subsector, only one of which receives regular interstellar traffic. The world of Glee can be reached with relative ease from the Hochiken People's Assembly to trailing. All other systems require multiple jumps and deep-space refuelling. This can be done but it requires more effort than the returns justify. HPA ships can occasionally be encountered in Darksky, as can Imperial vessels, but there is no subsector economy as such.

As with any area that lacks regular interstellar traffic, there are rumours of strange anomalies in Darksky as well as star systems that are not in the navigational databases. The latter is easy to disprove by simple observation, although it would require starship sensors used from a position on the fringes of the Rift. Tales of strange phenomena and general weirdness are harder to debunk but are very unlikely to be true.

ISOLATION

Located at least five parsecs from any other star system, Isolation lives up to its name. It is hard to see why such a world would be selected for colonisation, given the effort required just to survive there, but for the original settlers a hell-world in the middle of the rift offered security through anonymity. The original colony mission contained dissidents from the Rule of Man, who intended to disappear and certainly achieved their aim. Nothing was heard from them until an Imperial exploration ship ventured into the Lesser Rift in the mid 500s.

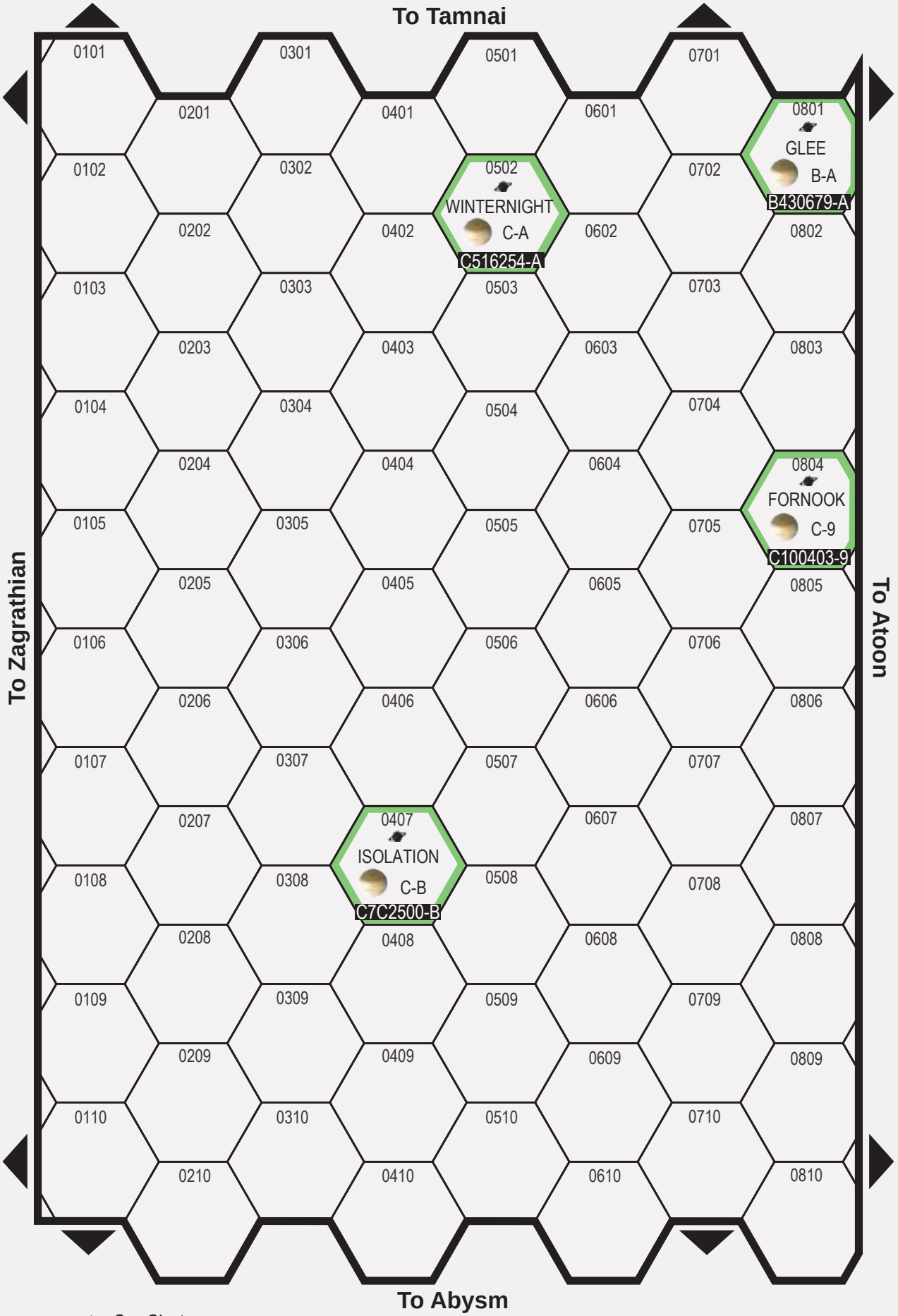
The colonists managed to survive on Isolation, despite its insidious atmosphere and generally hostile nature. They constructed several small cities connected by fast grav transport and settled down into loose cooperation. The one thing these groups had in common was a desire to be as far from the Ramshackle Empire as possible. Beyond that, they were very different; religious idealists, losers in an internal power struggle and other groups who felt safer undiscovered. Contact with the Third Imperium was an awkward and nervous business but whatever differences had existed had long been forgotten; to the Imperials, Isolation was just another forgotten colony.

Contact is today maintained by the occasional Scout Service vessel or navy Rift Cruiser, with occasional small cargoes arriving at the world's central starport. Isolation has little to export, other than minor unique items such as artwork, so trade is minimal. However, there are suspicions that the life support technology used by the cities of Isolation is not of human origin. Not necessarily more advanced, it is… different and makes use of some components whose nature is a closely-guarded secret. Attempts to gain access and examine these systems have insofar been unsuccessful, leading to speculation that the people of Isolation may have something to hide.

ISOLATION

UWP	C7C2500–B	
Starport	C	Routine
Size	7	11,200km
Atmosphere	C	Insidious
Hydrosphere	2	20%
Population	5	Hundreds of thousands
Government Type	0	No Government Structure
Law Level	0	No prohibitions
Technology Level	B	Lower Average Imperial

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Fornook	0804	—	C100403-9	Ni Va	—	—	G
Glee	0801	—	B430679-A	De Na Ni Po	—	—	—
Isolation	0407	—	C7C2500-B	FL He Ni	—	—	G
Winternight	0502	—	C516254-A	Ic Lo	—	—	G



A

Gateway

DARKSKY SUBSECTOR

ATOON SUBSECTOR

Atoon is characterised by groupings of two or three star systems separated by two to three parsec gaps. There are no mains or significant clusters, making commerce and the construction of a coherent interstellar power problematic. Despite this, about half of the subsector is the territory of the Hochiken People's Assembly. The remainder is independent, although the three-system cluster around Luray is claimed by the HPA.

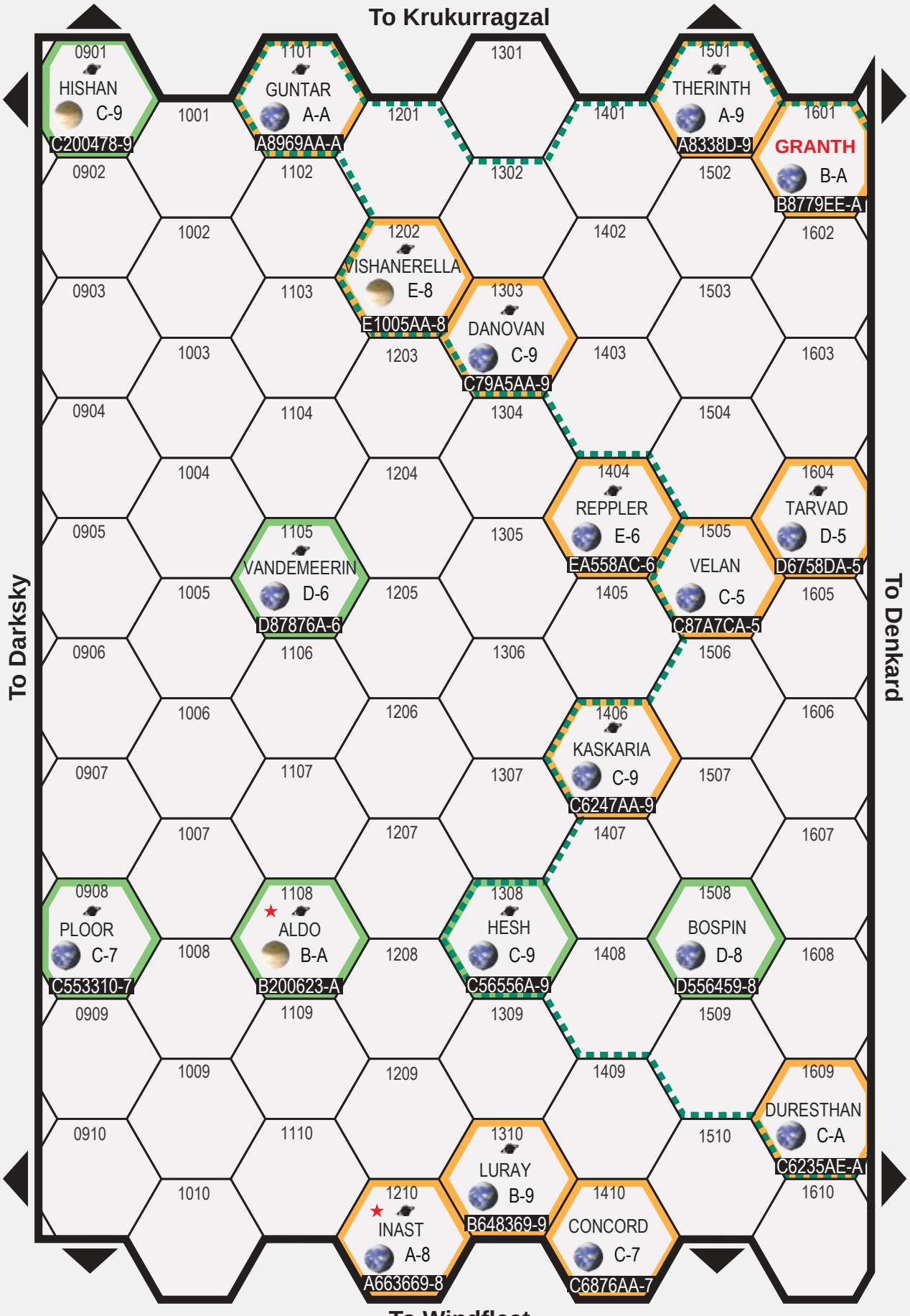
The presence of a K'Kree client state immediately to coreward is undoubtedly a worry for the HPA, although little information is available about relations between these states. It is probable some form of border agreement is in place since there does not seem to be a great deal of naval activity in the coreward end of the subsector, and it is thought trade ships cross back and forth on a frequent basis. The rimward end is more active due to tensions with the Plavian League. There have been numerous incidents which stop just short of warfare and it is obvious to any observer that open conflict is only a matter of time.

GRANTH

Granth is an old colony situated on what used to be a comfortable, temperate and Earth-like world at the extreme coreward end of the sector. In recent times the world has become polluted and rather grim. The nine billion people living on Granth are concentrated into several mega-arcologies, some of which are situated on the seabed or largely underground. There is also a vast arcology with a population over 1 billion on the largest moon of Granth, plus several military cities scattered across the planet in isolated and defensible locations. These are part fortresses and part manufacturing centres, turning out endless shiploads of weaponry for the HPA's armed forces.

As the capital of the Hochiken People's Assembly (HPA), Granth does not have its own planetary governmental centre. Instead, the world is governed from the Orbital People's Administrative Centre (O-PAC), which houses and handles the bureaucratic

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Aldo	1108	N	B200623-A	Na Ni Va	—	—	G
Bospin	1508	—	D556459-8	Ni Pa	—	Hochiken	—
Concord	1410	—	C6876AA-7	Ag Ni Ga Ri	A	—	—
Danovan	1303	—	C79A5AA-9	Ni Wa	A	Hochiken	G
Duresthan	1609	—	C6235AE-A	Ni Po	A	Hochiken	—
Granth	1601	—	B8779EE-A	Hi In	A	Hochiken	—
Guntar	1101	—	A8969AA-A	Hi In	A	Hochiken	G
Hesh	1308	—	C56556A-9	Ag Ni	—	Hochiken	G
Hishan	0901	—	C200478-9	Ni Va	—	—	G
Inast	1210	N	A663669-8	Ni Ri	A	—	G
Kaskaria	1406	—	C6247AA-9		A	Hochiken	G
Luray	1310	—	B648369-9	Lo	A	—	G
Ploor	0908	—	C553310-7	Lo Po	—	—	G
Reppler	1404	—	EA558AC-6		A	—	G
Tarvad	1604	—	D6758DA-5	Lt	A	Hochiken	G
Therinth	1501	—	A8338DA-9	Na Po	A	Hochiken	G
Vandemeerin	1105	—	D87876A-6	Ag	—	—	G
Velan	1505	—	C87A7CA-5	Lt Wa	A	Hochiken	G
Vishanarella	1202	—	E1005AA-8	Ni Va	A	Hochiken	G


To Krukurragzal
0901
HISHAN
C-9
C200478-9
1101
GUNTAR
A-A
A8969AA-A
1301
1501
THERINTH
A-9
A8338D-9
1601
GRANTH
B-A
B8779EE-A
1001
1201
1401
0902
1102
1302
1502
1002
1402
1602
1202
VISHANERELLA
E-8
E1005AA-8
0903
1103
1303
1503
DANOVAN
C-9
C79A5AA-9
1003
1203
1403
1603
0904
1104
1304
1504
1004
1204
1404
REPPLER
E-6
EA558AC-6
1604
TARVAD
D-5
D6758DA-5
0905
1105
VANDEMEERIN
D-6
D87876A-6
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1406
KASKARIA
C-9
C6247AA-9
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0907
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1307
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1007
1207
1407
1607
0908
PLOOR
C-7
C553310-7
1108
ALDO
B-A
B200623-A
1308
HESH
C-9
C56556A-9
1508
BOSPIN
D-8
D556459-8
1008
1208
1408
1608
0909
1109
1309
1509
1009
1209
1409
1609
DURESTHAN
C-A
C6235AE-A
0910
1110
1310
LURAY
B-9
B648369-9
1510
1010
1610
1210
INAST
A-8
A663669-8
1410
CONCORD
C-7
C6876AA-7
To Darksky
To Denkard
To Windfleet
B
Gateway
ATOON SUBSECTOR
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Other Naval Base
Secure System
Amber Zone
Hochiken People's Assembly border
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)

apparatus of the entire HPA. With a population of several tens of millions, the O-PAC is a critical part of the functioning of the Assembly, and has always been considered a no-shoot target in the various power struggles in the Assembly's history. The place has been stormed more than once by ground troops, however.

Granth's main product, apart from bureaucracy, is war material for the Assembly's ever-growing armies and fleets. Several planetside and orbital yards construct ships, weapons and vehicles from materials brought in by an endless stream of freighters. As the source of most of the weaponry in use by the HPA, control of Granth is vital to control of the HPA as a whole. Various ambitious leaders from other parts of the HPA have designs on it, with the result that security is tight. All traffic, even that intended for various outsystem installations, has to come into Granth Central Starport and be transferred to local transports before proceeding to its destination. Outgoing goods are treated the same way, allowing the central government to watch what is going where.

The system is heavily militarised, with fixed and semi-mobile installations backing up the huge Granth System Fleet. The jump-capable tenders of the strategic reserve are based in the Granth System along with a powerful fleet answering directly to the Assembly President, ruler of the entire HPA – at least in name. In reality, these massive forces are more to prevent an ambitious admiral from attempting a coup than to defend the system. It is well known the President and his supporters are gradually losing control of the outlying systems and the more they fortify their position at the capital, the freer rein the frontier commanders have. At present these commanders are jostling for position but it seems likely that an alliance will arise capable of challenging the President's authority.

Life in Granth is subject to strict laws and harsh policing, a situation much worse for offworld visitors. Uniformed and covert operatives of the Special Service Bureau, a secret police force, have a wide range of powers. These extend into military matters, creating an additional complication in naval or military operations. It may be the strangulating internal politics of the HPA are the single biggest impediment to its conquest of the Plavian League.

GRANTH

UWP	B8779EE–A	
Starport	B	Good
Size	8	12,800km
Atmosphere	7	Standard; Tainted
Hydrosphere	7	70%
Population	9	Billions
Government Type	E	Religious Autocracy
Law Level	E	Full-fledged police state
Technology Level	A	Interstellar community

LURAY

Lying on the fringe of HPA space, Luray is a warm, damp world inhabited by some 9,000 souls. Technically claimed by the HPA, Luray has not been occupied by its forces. This is for a number of reasons, not least of which because Luray is horribly inhospitable. The entire human population lives in a fortified enclosure that is all that remains of a rather grand starport and city built by entrepreneurial corporations operating out of the Heptad many years ago. The designation of Class B for the starport is rather kind; the orbital highport is a poor remnant of what it once was, prone to dangerous system failures and the occasional outright disaster. Ground facilities are run-down but functional, although few ships come through the port these days.

The downport and associated city are a lawless, violent place ruled by armed bands who follow various charismatic leaders vying for control of the port facility and the little trade it brings in. Refugees from the Plavian league and the HPA, usually criminals and political escapees respectively, swell the numbers of colonists from time-to-time, but the gain is far outweighed by the number of shootings and other violent deaths. Outside the fortified port area, Luray is one gigantic, chilly swamp roamed by a variety of dangerous creatures, some of which will attack the port or its supporting farms on occasion. The world may have considerable natural resources; finding them has proved so dangerous that to date no accurate survey has ever been made.

Neighbouring Inast was conquered by a rogue HPA fleet about a century ago, creating a quasi-independent world which tries to play off the HPA and the Plavian League to its own advantage. Luray provides neutral ground where trade and some unofficial diplomacy can take place. This occasionally results in a surge in trade or at least a few ships passing through the remnant of the starport.

LURAY

UWP	B648369–9	
Starport	B	Good
Size	6	9,600km
Atmosphere	4	Thin; Tainted
Hydrosphere	8	80%
Population	3	Thousands
Government Type	6	Captive Government / Colony
Law Level	9	Possession of weapons outside the home prohibited
Technology Level	9	Anti-Gravity

PLANETARY TAKEOVER AND RESISTANCE

It is very difficult to take control over an entire planet with a significant population but for a starfaring power there is often no need. One method used by rogue HPA commanders, and elsewhere by others with a few ships to their name, is to take control of the starport and a small surrounding area. This is achievable without violence in many situations but even if force is required it need not be particularly destructive. The ability to land troops almost anywhere and take control of lightly defended infrastructure allows an indirect approach to the downport itself, whose defences may not be sufficient to prevent a direct landing in any case.

However, often the invader will simply declare they are now in charge, perhaps couched in friendly terms as a protector or guarantor of free trade. With armed starships in orbit, it is typical for local authorities to play along with a polite fiction or to take a deal unless it is unacceptable. None of this guarantees loyalty, of course. If the armed ships are transferred away or driven off, the locals will not fight for their erstwhile masters. In short, taking control of a backwater world is easy. Keeping control can be more difficult.

Outlying areas have to be pacified, coerced, won over or ignored. Which depends greatly upon local conditions. Often an offworld power will have control over the port region without changing the rest of the planet. Sometimes an insurgency or direct military opposition will emerge. It has been known for an offworld takeover to result in civil war, in which resistance is met with force by those cooperating with the invaders. This can have nasty consequences long after the invaders have moved on.

Takeovers of this sort are usually ramshackle and finite in existence, providing opportunities for mercenaries and troublemakers to ply their trade for one side or the other. The sort of world that is worth taking over is not easily pacified by force, whilst those that are easy to control produce few resources. Having a home of this sort is seen as prestigious by some HPA commanders or rogue fleet leaders, although others might disparagingly refer to it as ‘chicken farming’. On occasion a group of ship commanders or an admiral ends up involved in a quagmire trying to keep control of a world valuable only to their egos. Resources are squandered and ships are tied down achieving nothing but the eventual eclipse of those involved. A common phrase for this fate is to have ‘bought a poultry farm’. A number of the HPA commanders whose paper strength is considerable are actually well on the way to becoming full-time chicken farmers.

DENKARD SUBSECTOR

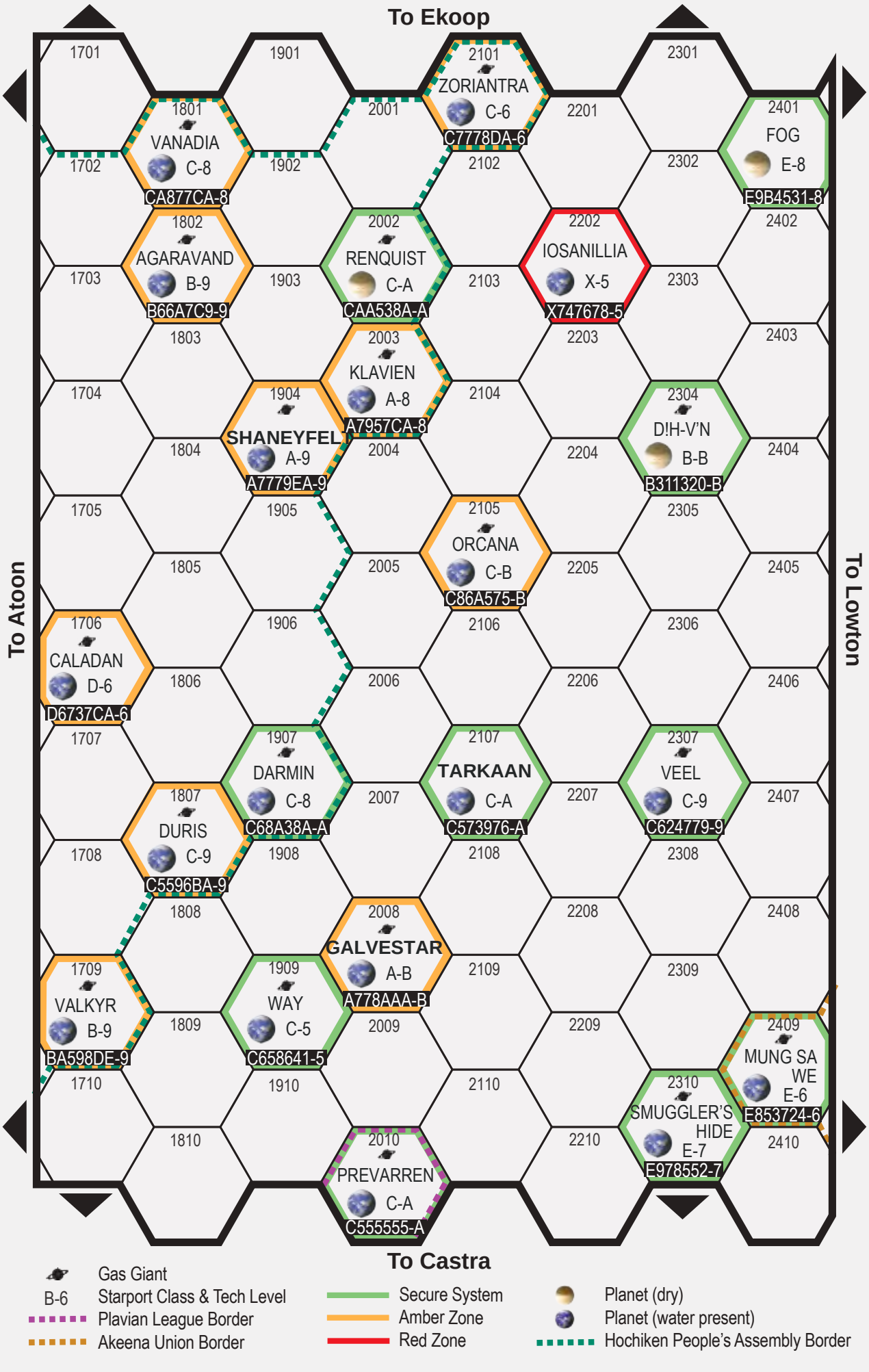
Denkard exhibits similar low stellar density to Atoon, particularly on the trailingward side of the subsector. All star systems are accessible by a jump-2 ship but routes are likely to be predictable. There is little trade rimward into the territory of the Plavian League, although in less turbulent times the Galvestar-Prevarren run used to be a regular conduit. About half the subsector is claimed by the Hochiken People's Assembly but this does not translate to being unified or untroubled. The internal politics of the HPA are such that worlds distant from the capital may be almost entirely beyond its control at least some of the time.

The subsector can be a difficult place to do business, largely due to the politics of the HPA. Even when its leaders are not bickering among themselves, some of them are engaging in projects that destabilise the rest of the subsector. It has been some years since a fleet went rogue and conquered somewhere but individual ship captains have been known to take their disaffection to extremes and embark on private ventures. This means that an HPA warship might decide to rob a passing vessel despite being assigned to protect local shipping, or a security contingent may start running a protection racket if it seems profitable enough.

DARMIN

Darmin is a water world with little land above sea level. What there is tends to be rocky and of little use. The 6,000 inhabitants live in a single floating city anchored in the lee of an island chain near the equator. When necessary the city can move slowly, enabling it to relocate to the most sheltered position possible. Most storms can be ridden out in place but when a particularly violent one is forecast the entire

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Agaravand	1802	—	B66A7C9-9	Ri Wa	A	Hochiken	G
Caladan	1706	—	D6737CA-6	—	A	Hochiken	G
D!h-v'n	2304	—	B311320-B	Ic Lo	—	—	G
Darmin	1907	—	C68A38A-A	Lo Wa	—	Hochiken	G
Duris	1807	—	C5596BA-9	Ni	A	Hochiken	G
Fog	2401	—	E9B4531-8	Fl Ni		—	—
Galvestar	2008	—	A778AAA-B	Hi In	A	—	G
Iosanillia	2202	—	X747678-5	Ag Lt Ni	R	—	—
Klavien	2003	—	A7957CA-8	Ag	A	Hochiken	G
Mung Sa We	2409	—	E853724-6	Po	—	Akeena	G
Orcana	2105	—	C86A575-B	Ni Wa	A	—	G
Prevarren	2010	—	C555555-A	Ag Ni	—	Plavian	G
Renquist	2002	—	CAA538A-A	Fl Lo	—	Hochiken	G
Shaneyfelt	1904	—	A7779EA-9	Hi In	A	Hochiken	G
Smuggler's Hide	2310	—	E978552-7	Ag Ni	—	—	G
Tarkaan	2107	—	C573976-A	Hi In	—	—	—
Valkyr	1709	—	BA598DE-9	—	A	Hochiken	G
Vanadia	1801	—	CA877CA-8	Ag Ri	A	Hochiken	G
Veel	2307	—	C624779-9	—	—	—	G
Way	1909	—	C658641-5	Ag Lt Ni	—	—	G
Zoriantra	2101	—	C7778DA-6	—	A	Hochiken	G



C

Gateway

DENKARD SUBSECTOR

population battens down and the city is moved to safety. Upon occasion it has been necessary to cut the anchor chains and allow the whole settlement to be blown downwind. This has not occurred in a decade but the propulsion and stabilisation systems are carefully maintained just in case.

Darmin's city/raft was created as a platform for aquaculture. The seas are for the most part very shallow or extremely deep, with little in between. The island chain lies at the centre of a wide subsea mesa where the water is an average 50 metres deep. Huge seabed farms are worked by robots and submarines, which also herd large shoals of fish. The world's primary export is seafood and sea-grown plants, most of which are processed into a rather unpleasant smelling paste to be shipped offworld. When combined with other ingredients the paste can be made palatable, although a taste of the sea always remains.

Darmin has the potential to be developed into a 'breadbasket' – albeit of a fishy sort – for the HPA. Doing so would require an influx of workers and equipment, accompanied by the development of more settlements. This would be quite an undertaking, requiring a level of coordination and cooperation rarely seen in the HPA. Minor and piecemeal efforts have been made, resulting in a string of half-built installations on the less forbidding land. A few of these are still underway, whilst others are being unofficially cannibalised to expand the more viable projects. At most a few hundred people are involved in this endeavour but the exact number is not known.

DARMIN

UWP	C68A38A–A	
Starport	C	Routine
Size	6	9,600km
Atmosphere	8	Dense
Hydrosphere	A	Water World
Population	3	Thousands
Government Type	8	Civil Service Bureaucracy
Law Level	A	Weapon possession prohibited
Technology Level	A	Interstellar community

TARKAAN

Tarkaan is a high-population world located two parsecs from the official border of the Hochiken People's Assembly. It is dry, with a tainted atmosphere which will make visitors ill but is harmless to those born planetside. The availability of water determined the initial settlement pattern and thus the entire future of the world; cities were founded at the centre of well-watered areas and separated from one another by expanses of badlands or desert. Over time nearby cities coalesced into nations along geographical lines, and competition for resources inevitably led to friction.

HPA diplomats have attempted to win over or simply annex segments of the world population, without much success. The only thing the people of Tarkaan hate more than outside overlords seems to be one another; there are dozens of small states making up the population of around seven billion and most seem hostile to everyone else. This does not mean the nations of Tarkaan will not make use of foreign mercenaries or trade for weapons. They are quite happy to use outside help in their internal struggles, just not very welcoming or polite about it. Tarkaan has become known in the mercenary marketplace as somewhere there is always work for those willing to be treated with contempt by their clients.

The fragmentation of Tarkaan means that despite a good technological base and high population the world is economically unimportant. Industrial output and interstellar trade income are both

TARKAAN

UWP	C573976–A	
Starport	C	Routine
Size	5	8,000km
Atmosphere	7	Standard; Tainted
Hydrosphere	3	30%
Population	9	Billions
Government Type	7	Balkanisation
Law Level	6	All firearms except shotguns prohibited
Technology Level	A	Interstellar community

largely swallowed up by militarisation or expended in financing wars. This has been the situation for decades, with many conflicts having roots in old hatred rather than modern issues. The population are generally willing to put this enmity aside long enough to gang up on a rival nation that is getting too powerful or aligning itself with an outside power.

CONFLICT ON TARAKAN

The nations of Tarakan are not large but have sufficient population and industry to field significant armed forces. These are equipped with locally produced weaponry and, unusually, set up for on-planet conflict rather than the defence of their world against outsiders. It is common for worlds with significant interstellar contact to tailor their forces to deal with an invasion or raids but the nations of Tarakan pose more of a threat to one another than any offworld power might. Aerospace defences exist and could be used against offworld raiders, however they are mostly designed to protect cities and critical infrastructure against grav tanks and missiles.

Due to financial restrictions, most military forces on Tarakan use ground vehicles for transport. The superior mobility afforded by grav vehicles makes them attractive for spearhead units or heavy assault formations, which bear the brunt of fighting. The usual pattern is an assault by grav-borne forces absorbed by less mobile ground-pounders before the defender's grav-mobile assets counterattack. Occasionally a decisive victory is achieved but more commonly a little territory and some resource-production areas change hands.

War on Tarakan is usually limited by mutual consent but there have been occasions where deep hatreds inspired more extreme conflict. This has included sneak attacks with small nuclear devices smuggled into a city, chemical warfare and the all-out obliteration of cities using either nuclear weapons or orbital bombardment.

The radioactive crater where the city of Speztyi once stood is now home to a very curious installation. Some years after the strike that wiped out the city, a starship of unknown origin landed and built a self-contained settlement using robots. The ship then departed, returning a few times to deliver some kind of cargo or personnel. Surrounded by a heavy defence zone of robotic weaponry, this settlement has defied all attempts to investigate or make contact with its inhabitants. It is rumoured to be populated only by robots but most species could live comfortably and safely in such an environment with proper radiation shielding. The settlement has had few offworld visits in the past five years and none of Tarakan's nations are willing to risk crossing the radioactive defence zone to look more closely at what might be going on there.

LOWTON SUBSECTOR

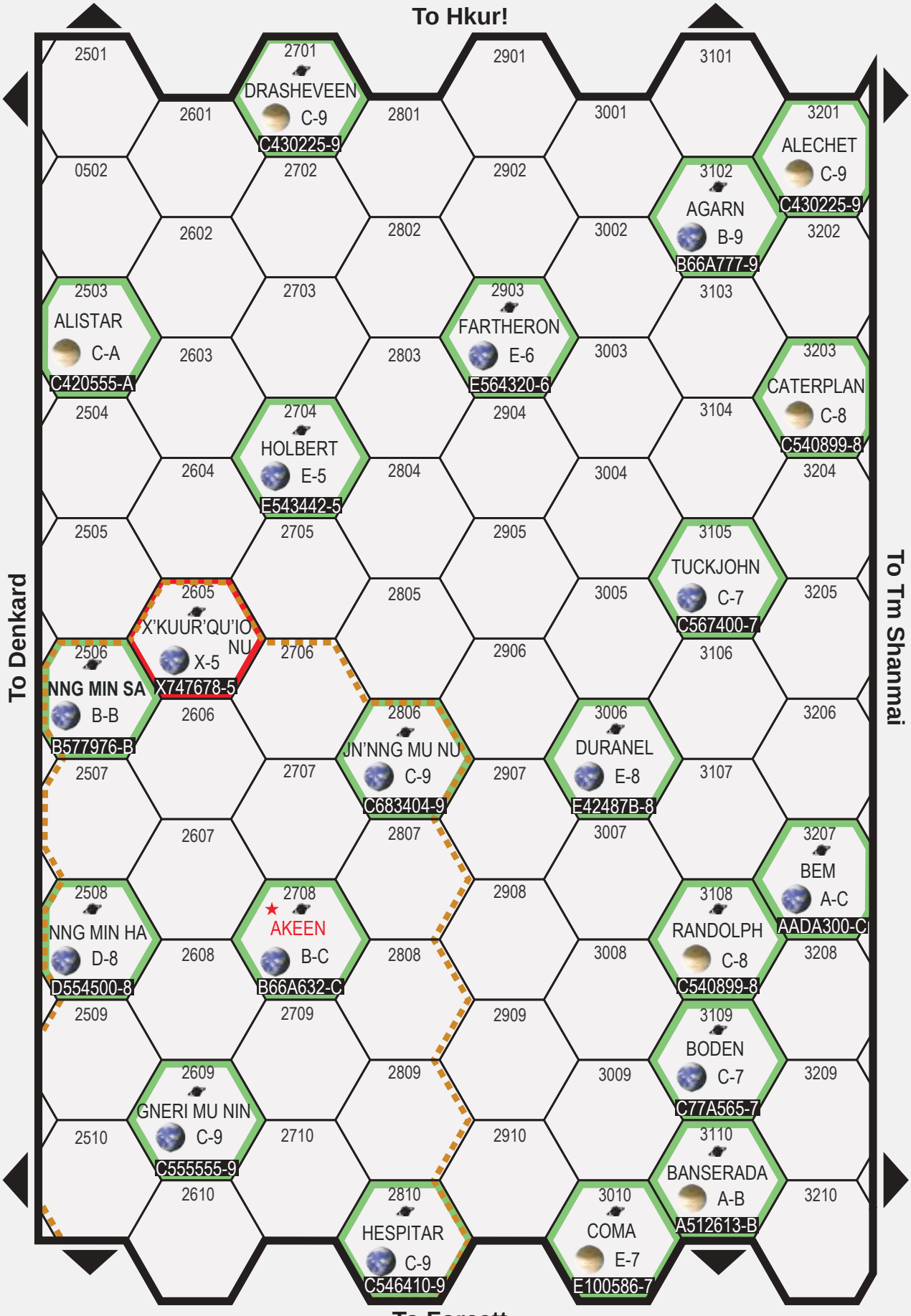
Lowton has the same low stellar density as the subsectors to spinward of it. This makes transit into the much denser systems of Hkur! subsector to coreward a more difficult prospect and limits trade in that direction. Little is known about the people of that subsector outside the Akeena Union, which conducts some trade in that direction. A small main gives access to the subsectors trailingward but there is little or no information in the publicly available databases about this region.

About half of the worlds are part of the Akeena Union, which is made up of a close alliance of humans and Akeed. The Akeed do not eat meat and humans of the Union collectively became vegetarians many generations ago. This makes relations with the K'Kree much easier and of all the states in Gateway the Akeed Union is the closest to having friendly relations with the Lords of Thunder. K'Kree trade ships are routinely sighted in the territory of the Union. This in turn draws traders and diplomats from the nearest Gateway polities in the hope of learning more about the Lords of Thunder or profiting from relations with them.

AKEEN

Homeworld of the Akeed, and capital of their multi-world state, Akeen is a water world with a number of archipelagos and island chains. The Akeed seem to be equally at home in the water as on land and little is known about their society. What is known is perplexing and more usually utterly incomprehensible to human outsiders. The Akeed seem to like it that way, although whether they are deliberately keeping secrets or are just so different that outsiders cannot fathom their culture is open to debate.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Agarn	3102	—	B66A777-9	Ri Wa	—	—	G
Akeen	2708	N	B66A632-C	Ht Ni Ri Wa	—	Akeena	G
Alechet	3201	—	C430225-9	De Lo Po	—	—	—
Alistar	2503	—	C420555-A	De He Ni Po	—	—	—
Banserada	3110	—	A512613-B	Ic Na Ni	—	—	G
Bem	3207	—	AADA300-C	Ht Lo	—	—	G
Boden	3109	—	C77A565-7	Ni Wa	—	—	G
Caterplan	3203	—	C540899-8	De Po	—	—	—
Coma	3010	—	E100586-7	Ni Va	—	—	G
Drasheveen	2701	—	C430225-9	De Lo Po	—	—	G
Duranel	3006	—	E42487B-8	—	—	—	G
Fartheron	2903	—	E564320-6	Lo	—	—	G
Gneri Mu Nin	2609	—	C555555-9	Ag Ni	—	Akeena	G
Hespitar	2810	—	C546410-9	Ni	—	Akeena	G
Holbert	2704	—	E543442-5	Lt Ni Po	—	—	G
Jh'nng Mu Nu	2806	—	C683404-9	Ni	—	Akeena	G
Nng Min Ha	2508	—	D554500-8	Ag Ni	—	Akeena	G
Nng Min Sa	2506	—	B577976-B	Hi In	—	Akeena	G
Randolph	3108	—	C540899-8	De He Po	—	—	G
Tuckjohn	3105	—	C567400-7	Ni	—	—	—
X'kuur'qu'io Nu	2605	—	X747678-5	Ag Lt Ni	R	Akeena	G


To Hkur!
To Denkard
To Tm Shanmai
To Forcett
2501
2601
0502
2602
2503
ALISTAR
C-A
C420555-A
2603
2504
2604
2505
2605
X'KUUR'QU'IO NU
X-5
X747678-5
2506
NNG MIN SA
B-B
B577976-B
2606
2507
2607
2508
NNG MIN HA
D-8
D554500-8
2608
2509
2609
GNERI MU NIN
C-9
C555555-9
2510
2610
2701
DRASHEVEEN
C-9
C430225-9
2702
2602
2703
2704
HOLBERT
E-5
E543442-5
2604
2705
2706
2606
2707
2607
2708
AKEEN
B-C
B66A632-C
2608
2709
2609
2710
2610
2801
2901
2802
2902
2803
2903
FARTHERON
E-6
E564320-6
2903
2804
2904
2805
2905
2806
JN'NNG MU NU
C-9
C683404-9
2906
2806
2907
2807
2908
2808
2809
2909
2810
HESPITAR
C-9
C546410-9
2910
3101
3001
3201
ALECHET
C-9
C430225-9
3102
AGARN
B-9
B66A777-9
3002
3202
3103
3003
3203
CATERPLAN
C-8
C540899-8
3104
3004
3204
3105
TUCKJOHN
C-7
C567400-7
3005
3205
3106
3006
DURANEL
E-8
E42487B-8
3206
3107
3007
3207
BEM
A-C
AADA300-C
3108
RANDOLPH
C-8
C540899-8
3008
3208
3109
BODEN
C-7
C77A565-7
3009
3209
3110
BANSERADA
A-B
A512613-B
3010
COMA
E-7
E100586-7
3210
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Other Naval Base
Secure System
Red Zone
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)
Akeena Union Border

AKEEN

UWP	B66A632–C	
Starport	B	Good
Size	6	9,600km
Atmosphere	6	Standard
Hydrosphere	A	Water World
Population	6	Millions
Government Type	3	Self-Perpetuating Oligarchy
Law Level	2	Portable energy weapons prohibited
Technology Level	C	Average Imperial

Somewhat more is known about the human inhabitants of the orbital arcology (and starport) named Sky. Population and government codes are a best guess and refer to Sky rather than the planetary population. The laws of Sky defy comprehension and are probably based upon traditional Akeed values. The population, which is mostly human with significant numbers of Akeed plays an important part in the economic, military and political operations of the Union.

Various estimates exist as to the technological capabilities of the Akeed but these are mainly based on observations of the human population and their artefacts. It is thought the Akeed population numbers in the hundreds of millions and that there is an extensive underwater culture on the planet. Visitors are welcomed on Akeen (and at Sky) and are treated with courteous hospitality by the locals. However, they are restricted to Sky and the human enclaves on the planet's islands.

The Akeed do not eat meat and thus are not considered vermin by the K'Kree. Relations are thus fairly good, even with the Lords of Thunder, who maintain a small (human-free) enclave on one of Akeen's larger islands. This is said to be something of a paradise for K'Kree, with small but lush plains and a pleasant climate. Outsiders are not welcome other than Akeed diplomats and their vegetarian human attendants.

BANSERADA

UWP	A512613–B	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	5	8,000km
Atmosphere	1	Trace
Hydrosphere	2	20%
Population	6	Millions
Government Type	1	Company/Corporation
Law Level	3	Machine guns, automatic rifles prohibited
Technology Level	B	Lower Average Imperial

BANSERADA

Banserada lies at the trailing fringe of Gateway. It is not much better than a rockball world and not considered a permanent home even by its inhabitants. The entire population is employed by The Austen Group, a business conglomerate which also controls neighbouring Boden. The Austen Group makes a good profit from trade passing from the Akeena Union into Tm Shanmai and Rattler subsectors. Details are not publicly available but it is assumed the human state is under the control of the Lords of Thunder or in its political orbit.

Banserada builds a few starships for local clients. These are mostly small, as there is only one large-ship yard and this is always busy. The large yard constantly maintains and repairs the smaller yards, which are mobile and have their own jump drives. Occasionally a mobile yard from Banserada is sighted in a system many parsecs from home. At least two are currently in the Renkard Union, turning out corvettes as fast as possible. This supports the theory that the entire infrastructure of The Austen Group is ready to bug out of Banserada at a few weeks' notice. Scouting vessels constantly travel around the trailingward end of Gateway, presumably maintaining current information on safe destinations with good resources.

THE BANSERADA PROJECT

One of the ships built by the Austen Group in Banserada is of a very curious design. Despite possessing technology to rival many Imperial worlds, the Austen Group has chosen to build a large vessel without jump drives, using only reaction thrusters. According to those claiming insider knowledge, this vessel has no artificial gravity systems aboard. It is a majestic, if curiously primitive, thing. A central spindle is surrounded by four 'hamster-cage' rings set up as contrarotating pairs. The forward pair have a larger diameter than the aft pair and are probably used for accommodation. Fuel modules are docked in a cluster around the reaction drive which is located right aft.

This vessel, known only by is cryptic designation SC-02, set out from Banserada some years ago. After making two solar orbits and presumably conducting trials, the vessel began accelerating for a stellar slingshot manoeuvre. Its destination is thought to lie in the far outsystem, although no likely target body has been identified. What is most curious about this ship is that it is supplied and refuelled by conventional starships. These are easily able to match its velocity, attaining in a few hours the same vector it has taken six years for SC-02 to build. Specially designed tankers and supply vessels refuel the reaction thrusters every few weeks and it is possible the crewmembers are also rotated.

Why anyone would go to such lengths to send a vessel to the outsystem is completely unknown outside the Austen Group. One hypothesis is artificial gravity and conventional drives cannot or must not be used at the target point. There are no good suggestions as to why this would be and the Austen Group is not telling.

ABYSM SUBSECTOR

Abysm consists almost entirely of what is termed deep rift. There are only two star systems, although there may be rogue planets and comets as yet undiscovered. Abysm is considered a strategic asset by the Imperium as it creates a barrier to incursions and therefore a frontier that can be left lightly defended. Expeditions into the rift are occasionally undertaken by the Scout Service and private exploration companies. It is rumoured the Deepnight Corporation has one or more ships operating in this region, although to what end remains a mystery.

SPLINTER

Located five parsecs from anywhere, in the middle of the Lesser Rift, Splinter is a water world with an unbreathable carbon dioxide-nitrogen atmosphere. It has extensive but very primitive sea life, mostly of a single-celled nature. A small scientific colony was set up there several decades ago and has grown into a settlement of around 2,000 people. Most are researchers or their dependents, or employed in the service and support sector. The colony is entirely dependent upon support ships from the Galian Federation which travel by way of Pasternak and a deep-space refuelling point or tanker support.

The effort required to maintain the installation at Splinter makes some wonder if there is something more to it than investigating primitive ocean life. One idea, popularised by cranks and conspiracy theorists in the 1080s, is that Splinter is the site of a secret Galian psionics research installation, or perhaps a secure backup of all its records in case some unspecified disaster overtakes the Federation. Whether or not these ideas have any basis, Splinter's scientific community does produce regular, if dreary, papers on deep-ocean anaerobic life and its possible applications in terraforming projects.

SPLINTER

UWP	DAAA300–8	
Starport	D	Poor
Size	A	16,000km
Atmosphere	A	Exotic
Hydrosphere	A	Water World
Population	3	Thousands
Government Type	0	No Government Structure
Law Level	0	No prohibitions
Technology Level	8	Quality Computers

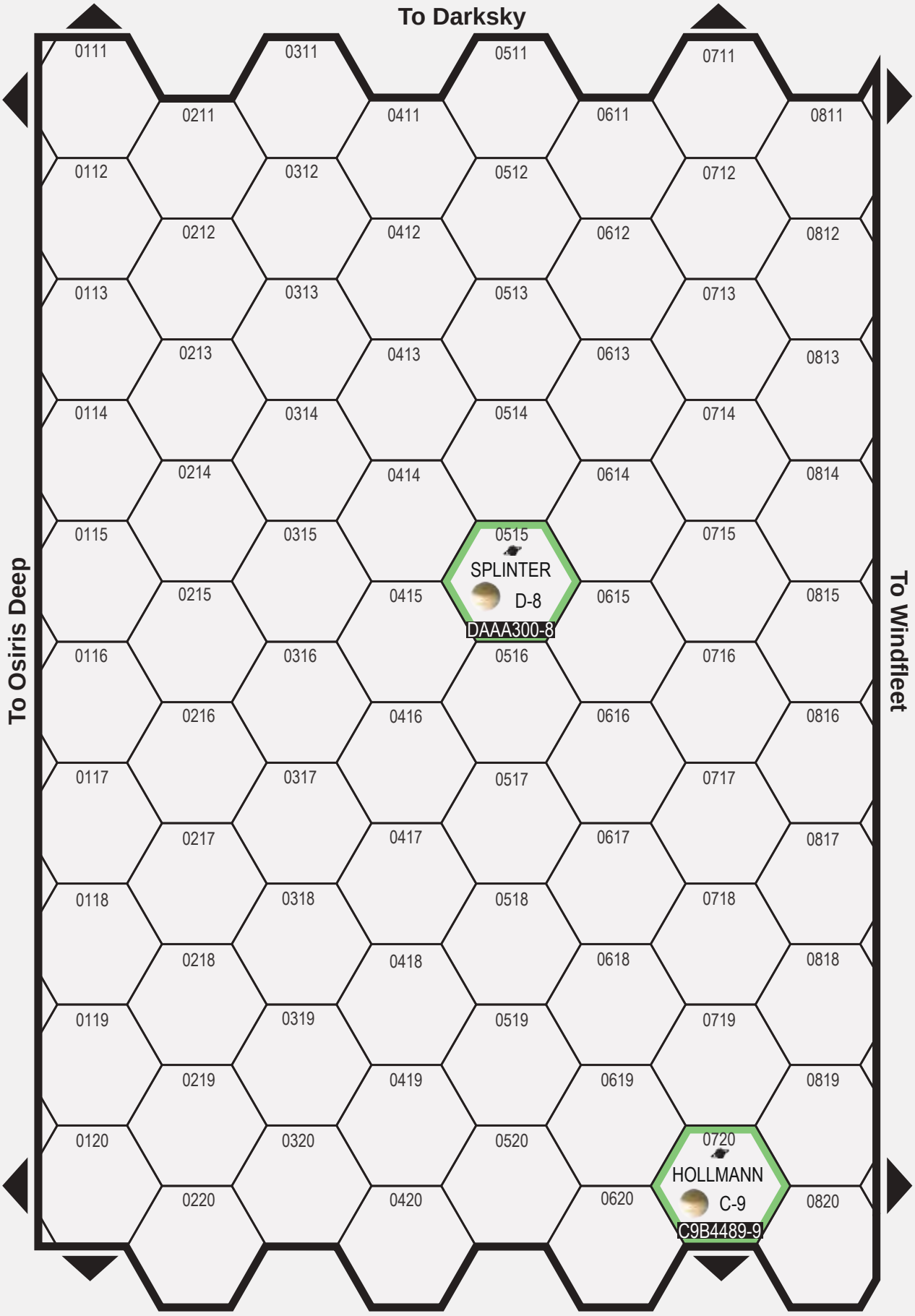
HAT PROJECTS

There is evidence of a number of what are unofficially known as HAT (Half-Assed Terraforming) projects in Gateway. These are usually the result of poor science or lack of funding but occasionally terraforming techniques might be carried out maliciously. This amounts to large-scale ecological warfare and is illegal in the Imperium, but where there is no over-arching interstellar government, local agreements, if any, prevail.

Most HAT projects fail quickly and have little impact on the target world. Others can cause significant long-term disruption but ultimately fail to alter conditions favourably. Very occasionally a terraforming project will take despite it having been abandoned, resulting in a war between local conditions and the introduced effects. This can create unusual conditions in some parts of a world without much affecting others. The locals might not even know something is happening, especially low-tech communities who think their weirdly changeable weather and climate pattern is the norm.

There are a few cases where a HAT project has been picked up by others for continuation or an alternative approach, or agencies are trying to reverse a project that has not gone as planned. There are, according to rumour, those who plan to ecosystem bomb worlds taken over by the K'Kree. One option is to seed large quantities of Splinter's anaerobic life in the oceans of a world in the hopes it will destabilise the ecosystem and make the world uninhabitable or intolerable for the Lords of Thunder.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Hollmann	0720	—	C9B4489-9	Fl Ni	—	—	G
Splinter	0515	—	DAAA300-8	Fl Lo	—	—	G


To Darksky
To Osiris Deep
To Windfleet
To Arconna
0111
0311
0511
0711
0211
0411
0611
0811
0112
0312
0512
0712
0212
0412
0612
0812
0113
0313
0513
0713
0213
0413
0613
0813
0114
0314
0514
0714
0214
0414
0614
0814
0115
0315
0515
SPLINTER
D-8
DAAA300-8
0715
0215
0415
0615
0815
0116
0316
0516
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0719
0219
0419
0619
0819
0120
0320
0520
0720
HOLLMANN
C-9
C9B4489-9
0220
0420
0620
0820
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Secure System
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)

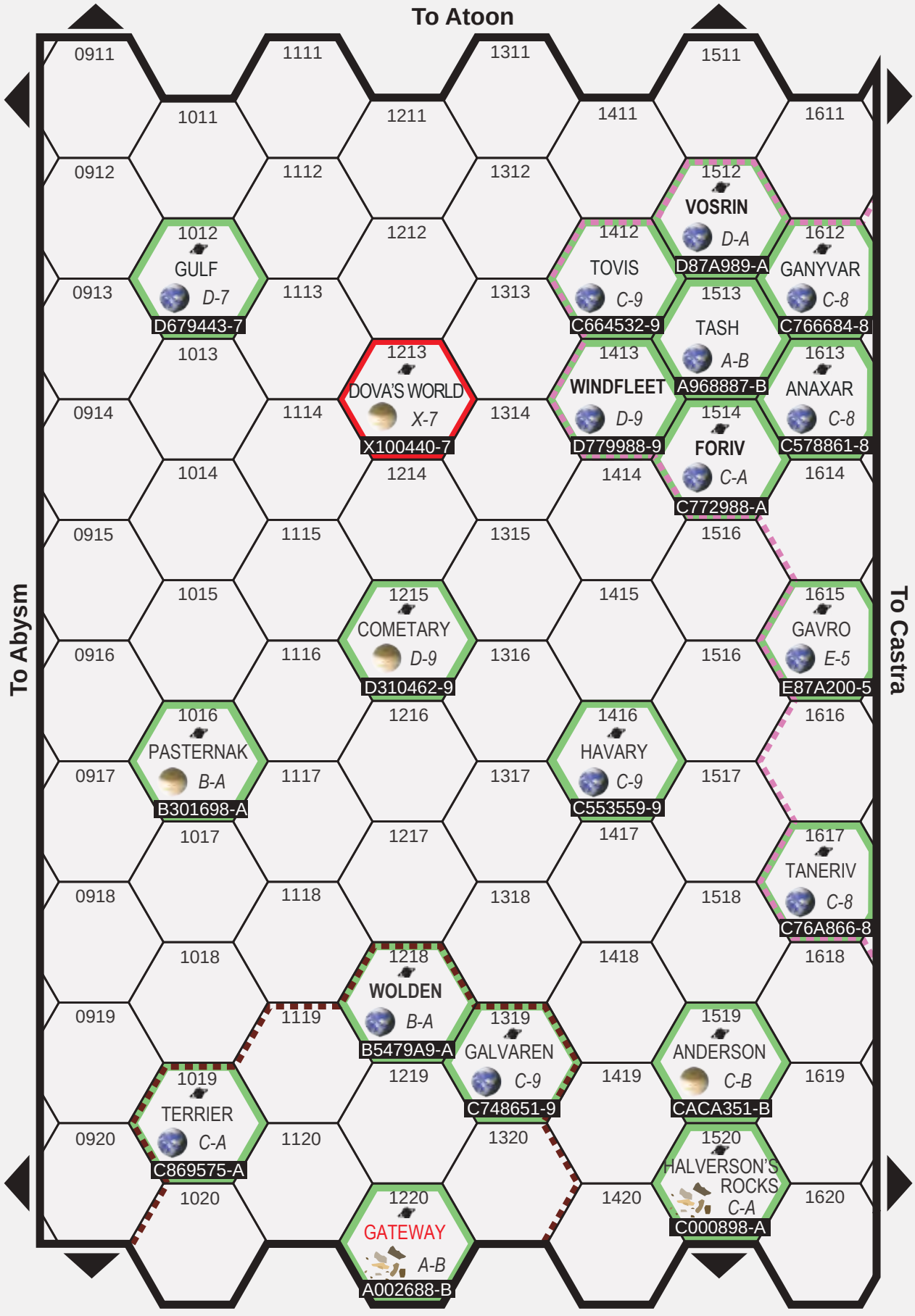
WINDFLEET SUBSECTOR

Windfleet is considered to lie partly in the Lesser Rift and partly on its fringe. There are no groupings of more than two star systems, with the exception of the Heptad. These seven systems are located in the trailing-coreward corner and are part of the Plavian League. The worlds between the League and the Galian Federation, notably Anderson and Havary, are important trade links whose starports would be upgraded but for wrangles about funding and permission from the planetary governments.

The independent worlds of Windfleet were once part of the Galian Trade League. This has left varying attitudes towards the successor states. Some worlds feel abandoned because they were left outside the newly formed breakaway states, others fought to become independent. Neither the Galian Federation nor the Plavian League is aggressive towards these worlds but both have their own agenda and are willing to oppose one another at the expense of local interests.

Until recently, the independent shipping corporation Gateway Shipping was active in Windfleet, notably on runs between the Plavian league and Galian Federation. Its presence has drawn down in recent years, although quietly. A few ships still make the Galian-Plavian run but there are virtually no vessels operating elsewhere in the subsector.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Anaxar	1613		C578861-8			Plavian	G
Anderson	1519		CACA351-B	Fl Lo		—	G
Cometary	1215		D310462-9	Ni		—	G
Dova's World	1213		X100440-7	Ni Va	R	—	G
Foriv	1514		C772988-A	Hi In		Plavian	G
Galvaren	1319		C748651-9	Ag Ni		Galian	G
Ganyvar	1612		C766684-8	Ag Ni Ga Ri		Plavian	G
Gateway	1220		A002688-B	As Ic Na Ni Va		Galian	G
Gavro	1615		E87A200-5	Lo Wa		Plavian	G
Gulf	1012		D679443-7	Ni		—	G
Halverson's Rocks	1520		C000898-A	As Na Va		—	G
Havary	1416		C553559-9	Ni Po		—	G
Pasternak	1016		B301698-A	Ic Na Ni Va		—	G
Taneriv	1617		C76A866-8	Ri Wa		Plavian	G
Tash	1513		A968887-B	Ri		Plavian	
Terrier	1019		C869575-A	Ni		Galian	G
Tovis	1412		C664532-9	Ag Ni		Plavian	
Vosrin	1512		D87A989-A	Hi In Wa		Plavian	G
Windfleet	1413		D779988-9	Hi In		Plavian	
Wolden	1218		B5479A9-A	Hi In		Galian	G


To Atoon
To Abysm
To Castra
To Beckann
0911
1111
1311
1511
1011
1211
1411
1611
0912
1112
1312
1512
VOSRIN
D-A
D87A989-A
1012
GULF
D-7
D679443-7
1212
1412
TOVIS
C-9
C664532-9
1612
GANYVAR
C-8
C766684-8
0913
1113
1313
1513
TASH
A-B
A968887-B
1013
1213
DOVA'S WORLD
X-7
X100440-7
1413
WINDFLEET
D-9
D779988-9
1613
ANAXAR
C-8
C578861-8
0914
1114
1314
1514
FORIV
C-A
C772988-A
1014
1214
1414
1614
0915
1115
1315
1516
1015
1215
COMETARY
D-9
D310462-9
1415
1615
GAVRO
E-5
E87A200-5
0916
1116
1316
1516
1016
PASTERNAK
B-A
B301698-A
1216
1416
HAVARY
C-9
C553559-9
1616
0917
1117
1317
1517
1017
1217
1417
1617
TANERIV
C-8
C76A866-8
0918
1118
1318
1518
1018
1218
WOLDEN
B-A
B5479A9-A
1418
1618
0919
1119
1319
GALVAREN
C-9
C748651-9
1519
ANDERSON
C-B
CACA351-B
1019
TERRIER
C-A
C869575-A
1219
1419
1619
0920
1120
1320
1520
HALVERSON'S ROCKS
C-A
C000898-A
1020
1220
GATEWAY
A-B
A002688-B
1420
1620
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Plavian League Border
Galian Federation Border
Secure System
Red Zone
Asteroids (no atmosphere/water)
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)

DOVA'S WORLD

Dova's World is listed in the navigational databases as a Red Zone, although that can mean something different outside the Imperium. Red Zones are normally implemented by the Imperial Navy for political or military reasons and the Scout Service for scientific or social reasons. Beyond the Imperial border, a Red Zone usually indicates extreme danger or a local interdiction that amounts to the same thing. In the case of Dova's World the former is the case. Nobody will stop a ship from going to Dova's World but whatever happens is the responsibility of the operators.

Dova's World is a small rockball with a single city of some 90,000 or so people. Its democratic government collapsed, leaving rival factions fighting for control of the world. The remains of the starport have been declared a truce zone, where daring ship captains can make a good profit trading medical supplies, life support spares and personal weapons to delegates from the various factions. Buckwhackings and robberies are commonplace despite the truce, however, and it is not uncommon for a trade party to be engaged in a firefight before they are even out of sight of a visiting ship crew. The city's infrastructure is badly damaged and on the point of breakdown but there is no sign of abatement in the violence.

DOVA'S WORLD

UWP	X100440–7	
Starport	X	No starport
Size	1	1,600km
Atmosphere	0	No atmosphere
Hydrosphere	0	Desert World
Population	4	Tens of Thousands
Government Type	4	Representative Democracy
Law Level	0	No prohibitions
Technology Level	7	Lower Average Imperial

THE HALVERSON'S ROCKS CONTROVERSY

Halverson's Rocks is technically the name of the system's mainworld, a cluster of large planetoids in the inner asteroid belt, but the name is generally applied to the whole system. The star system is the territory of its independent government, at least according to the government itself. The corporation Gateway Metals, successor to Galastrian Metals, would disagree. According to repeated lawsuits filed on Gateway, the government of Halverson's Rocks is illegally in possession of the company's assets including mining ships, industrial facilities and a star system.

According to Gateway Metals, the Galastrian operation in the Halverson's Rocks should have gone to Gateway Metals as part of the reorganisation following the breakup of Galastrian 800 years ago. Instead, managers within the local operation co-opted all assets and illegally declared themselves a government. Most assets have been replaced several times over but Gateway Metals continues to pursue its claim to the system. The company does not really want to be a system government but it does want undisputed control over the three planetoid belts and their rich mineral wealth.

In the interim, a cold war is being fought between Gateway Metals and the government of Halverson's Rocks. On the whole, government ships operate mainly within the inner belt which contains the mainworld cluster whilst the outer belt is worked by Gateway Metals ships. The belt is actively disputed, with ships from both factions harassing one another as they search for new deposits. Neither wants a shooting war but incidents of armed harassment are common.

Whilst the locals use conventional mining techniques, Gateway Metals has positioned several mobile bases in the system. These are fitted with jump-1 drives and an array of detachable modules, permitting a base to be tailored to the needs of the local situation. Some bases have processing facilities whilst others are geared towards rest and recreation for mining crews. The bases deployed to Halverson's Rocks are armed for self-defence, carrying a contingent of fighters for local patrol and security work. Those operating in other systems may or may not be so equipped, depending on the situation.

No resolution is likely, so the armed standoff between corporation and system government is likely to continue unless something breaks the deadlock. Covert operations to obtain embarrassing evidence might

permit a legal solution and both sides have shown willing to use sabotage and deniable violence at times. Economics are another factor; Gateway Metals pressures independent ships not to deal with the local government whilst the government offers discounts and incentives to bring in goods not obtainable elsewhere.

GATEWAY

Gateway (sometimes called Gateway Prime) is an artificial planet, constructed in -224 by the Tharver-based firm Galastrian Metals. A large planetoid on the inner edge of the Galian Belt was hollowed out to create a worldlet that would be a base for mining operations. Technically, Gateway is part of the Galian Belt but is sometimes listed in astrographic data as a separate entity.

By the time it became independent in 251, Gateway was an extremely prosperous and populous world. The original hollowed-out area, now known as Coreworld, had become a park with a gigantic reservoir known as the Equatorial Sea. New living and working areas were built into the rock of the asteroid and its surface, creating a patchwork of utilitarian industrial and residential areas which give a first impression of a typical asteroid settlement. The interior is famed across the sector and considered worth a visit by rich tourists from the Imperium.

Gateway is currently the capital of the Galian Federation. Mining on the asteroid ceased long ago. Today, most of the world's income comes from processing of materials mined elsewhere in the system, from industry and shipbuilding on Gateway and through trade coming into the starport. One of Gateway's key export is starships, of which almost half are built at the huge Gateway Yards situated at the north pole of the worldlet. Black-and-red clad troops on retainer to the yards provide all internal security and police functions throughout Gateway, giving some indication of how important the yards are to the world and its society.

GATEWAY

UWP	A002688–B	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	0	Asteroid Belt
Atmosphere	0	None
Hydrosphere	2	20%
Population	6	Millions
Government Type	8	Civil Service Beaurocracy
Law Level	8	Long bladed weapons controlled; open possession prohibited
Technology Level	B	Quality Computers

CASTRA SUBSECTOR

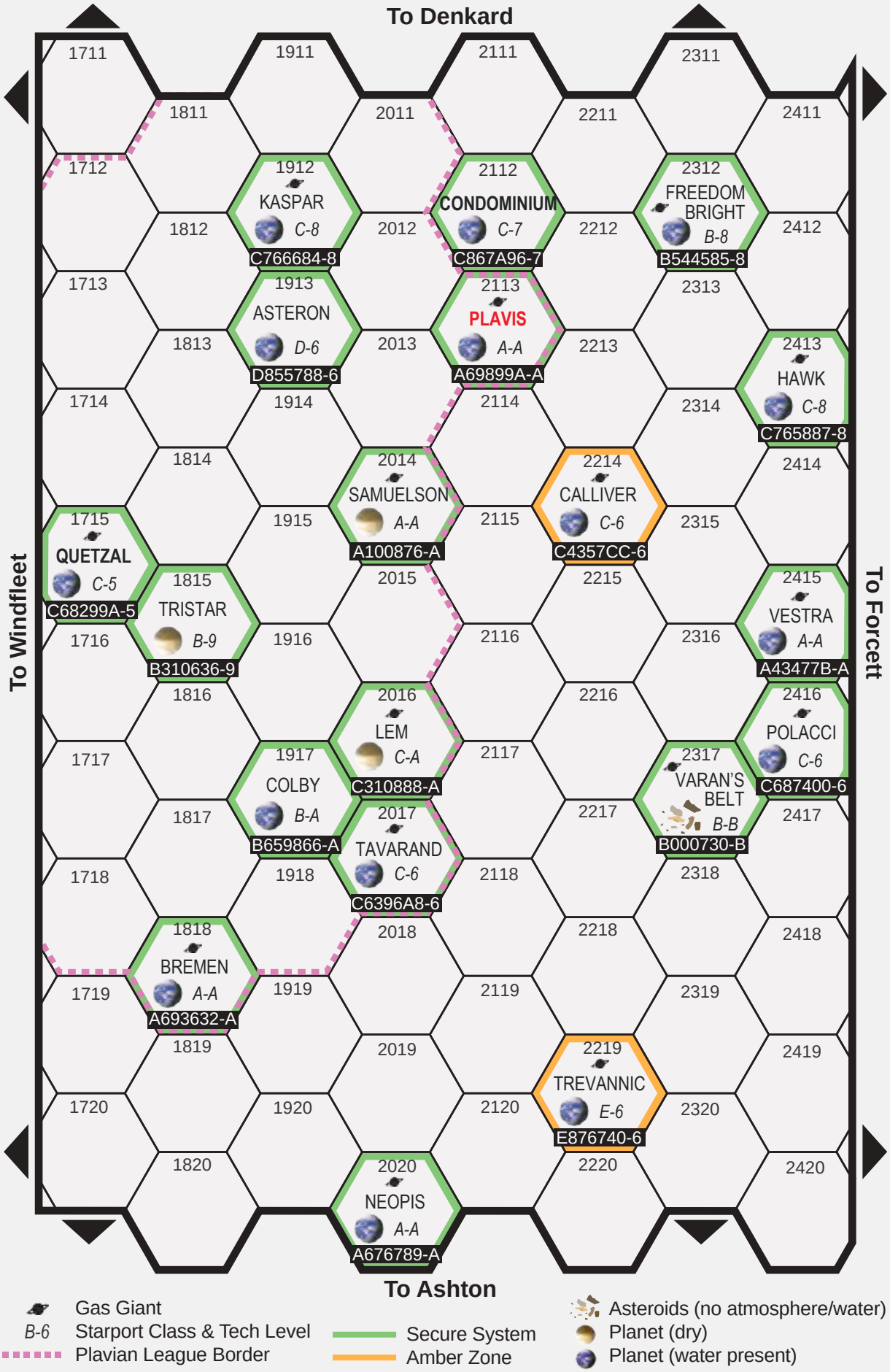
Castra would ideally be the crossroads of the sector but its astrographic realities mean navigation is difficult and many worlds are rather isolated. There are three groups of three star systems, two of which lie in the territory of the Plavian League. The other is known as the Vestra Triad and is isolated by a 2–3 parsec gap named the Prosaira Deep.

Jump-2 ships ply predictable routes between Castra, the Akeena union and the Swanfei Free Worlds. The latter run can be dangerous if a Swanfei leader decides a little deniable piracy is more profitable than guarding the trade routes. Plavian patrol ships are usually stationed along the trade routes as a deterrent. They may not be sufficient to stop an incident but as an official witness their captains can bring considerable influence and force to bear on a malefactor, unless the patrol ship mysteriously disappears. This has been known to happen and is officially blamed on well-armed pirates who clearly have moved on to other hunting grounds.

TREVANNIC

Trevannic lies between the Plavian League and the Swanfei Independency but a trade route using the world would require jump-3 vessels and is thus not viable. The world has little to offer economically so is generally ignored by the wider universe. Ships out of the Plavian League often make an out-and-back loop from Anderson in Windfleet to Neopis but few make the extra jump to Trevannic. This makes the system one of the most isolated in Gateway despite being more or less in the middle of the region.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Asteron	1913		D855788-6	Ag Ga		Plavian	
Bremen	1818		A693632-A	Ni		Plavian	G
Calliver	2214		C4357CC-6		A	—	G
Colby	1917		B659866-A			Plavian	
Condominium	2112		C867A96-7	Hi Ga		—	
Freedom Bright	2312		B544585-8	Ag Ni		—	G
Hawk	2413		C765887-8	Ga Ri		—	G
Kaspar	1912		C766684-8	Ag Ga Ni Ri		Plavian	G
Lem	2016		C310888-A	Na		Plavian	G
Neopis	2020		A676789-A	Ag		—	G
Plavis	2113		A69899A-A	Hi In		Plavian	G
Polacci	2416		C687400-6	Ni Ga		—	G
Quetzal	1715		C68299A-5	Hi Lt		Plavian	G
Samuelson	2014		A100876-A	Na Va		Plavian	G
Tavarand	2017		C6396A8-6	Ni		Plavian	G
Trevannic	2219		E876740-6	Ag	A	—	G
Tristar	1815		B310636-9	Na Ni		Plavian	
Varan's Belt	2317		B000730-B	As Na Va		—	G
Vestra	2415		A43477B-A			—	G


To Denkard
To Windfleet
To Forcett
To Ashton
1711
1911
2111
2311
1811
2011
2211
2411
1712
1912
KASPAR
C-8
C766684-8
2112
CONDOMINIUM
C-7
C867A96-7
2312
FREEDOM BRIGHT
B-8
B544585-8
1812
2012
2212
2412
1713
1913
ASTERON
D-6
D855788-6
2113
PLAVIS
A-A
A69899A-A
2313
1813
2013
2213
2413
HAWK
C-8
C765887-8
1714
1914
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2314
1814
2014
SAMUELSON
A-A
A100876-A
2214
CALLIVER
C-6
C4357CC-6
2414
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QUETZAL
C-5
C68299A-5
1915
2115
2315
1815
TRISTAR
B-9
B310636-9
2015
2215
2415
VESTRA
A-A
A43477B-A
1716
1916
2116
2316
1816
2016
LEM
C-A
C310888-A
2216
2416
POLACCI
C-6
C687400-6
1717
1917
COLBY
B-A
B659866-A
2117
2317
VARAN'S BELT
B-B
B000730-B
1817
2017
TAVARAND
C-6
C6396A8-6
2217
2417
1718
1918
2118
2318
1818
BREMEN
A-A
A693632-A
2018
2218
2418
1719
1919
2119
2319
1819
2019
2219
TREVANNIC
E-6
E876740-6
2419
1720
1920
2120
2320
1820
2020
NEOPIS
A-A
A676789-A
2220
2420
Gas Giant
B-6
Starport Class & Tech Level
Plavian League Border
Secure System
Amber Zone
Asteroids (no atmosphere/water)
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)

TREVANNIC

UWP	E876740–6	
Starport	E	Frontier Installation
Size	8	12,800km
Atmosphere	7	Standard; Tainted
Hydrosphere	6	60%
Population	7	Tens of millions
Government Type	4	Representative Democracy
Law Level	0	No prohibitions
Technology Level	6	Nuclear Power

Trevannic is home to around 90 million humans who have a TL6 civilisation, descended from Rule of Man-era colonists. They share their world with an unknown number of Droashav, who are often assumed to be a native species. In fact, this is unlikely to be the case as the Droashav are the only six-limbed species on Trevannic. The majority of Droashav live simple lives as TL1 desert nomads, some of whom have settled among the humans on the fringes of their lands. Both species seem to get along amicably enough most of the time and Droashav tribes will happily trade for mass-produced tools and weapons. This may have stunted their own technological growth.

There is a large enclave of Droashav in the northern reaches of the planet, in dry semi-arctic terrain. These Droashav possess TL4, which may have been learned from humans or developed by the Droashav themselves. It is thought the Droashav might be the remnants of a collapsed civilisation, although little effort has been made to find ruins or other evidence. The current working theory among those few scientists interested in this species is that they are descended from a species that developed elsewhere and set up a colony on Trevannic before collapsing back to the stone age. There may be other Droashav elsewhere.

VARAN'S BELT

UWP	B000730–B	
Starport	B	Good
Size	0	Asteroid Belt
Atmosphere	0	No atmosphere
Hydrosphere	0	Desert World
Population	7	Tens of millions
Government Type	3	Self-Perpetuating Oligarchy
Law Level	0	No prohibitions
Technology Level	B	Lower Average Imperial

VARAN'S BELT

The area of sparse star systems between the Plavian League and the Swanfei Independency is generally known as the Prosaira Deep. The jump-3 gap makes it difficult to reach Trevannic and the cluster of three worlds centring on Polacci. Nevertheless, Varan's belt was settled by miners and their dependents in the latter days of the Rule of Man. Throughout the Long Night, mining outposts in the system supplied Polacci and Vestra with raw materials, and the three worlds of the cluster retained a single interstellar government. The declining colony on Polacci was evacuated around -750, other than an ore transhipment base, but the industries of the Belt continued to thrive.

In -100, political troubles on Vestra resulted in the population of Varan's Belt declaring independence. A period of confrontation lasted until 350, at which time the two worlds entered into a trade and mutual support agreement that lasts to this day. Although independent, Varan's Belt has close ties with Vestra and with the re-established, independent and yet again failing, colony on Polacci.

The belt is fairly rich in iron and heavy metals and exports considerable quantities of metals and finished industrial items (mainly heavy industrial equipment) to the Plavian League by way of Calliver. Society

in the belt is free and easy, although as in most belt communities there is a code of taboo against certain activities that endanger the community. The differences in ideology between the belt and Vestra are immense and are to some extent a reaction to one another's policies. Despite the variances, both societies cooperate surprisingly well.

PLANETARY RAIDING AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

Piracy of interstellar cargoes is only one option available to those with a starship and loose morals. A much safer if often not very lucrative option is planetary raiding. In its most basic form, this involves landing a ship at a suitable site, driving off or eliminating opposition and looting the place for everything that can be quickly removed. The least profitable but least risky option is to engage in what is disparagingly referred to as cattle rustling or poultry theft – targeting small, remote mid-tech communities where resistance is minimal.

Bolder raiders will hit a town or installation, which might actually have something worth taking. The most callous will take life-support and power-generation equipment from an outsystem facility, leaving the populace to die or taking them hostage. Others settle for vehicles and non-vital equipment. A variation on this practice is to take hostages rather than harming the settlement itself, demanding a modest ransom for their return. This has the benefit of returning the people to work so they can generate more wealth to be stolen later.

Some planetary raiders take this a step further, demanding tribute rather than openly attacking. This might be phrased quite politely or dressed up in the trappings of an officious tax inspection or could be a straight demand. Farming multiple communities in this manner can produce a continuous, if modest, income even whilst the raiders are busy elsewhere. Of course, the 'farms' must be protected against other raiders and tribute is preferable to being slaughtered in a one-off orgy of pillaging. The raiders might be seen as a necessary evil and their elimination by a naval sweep the beginning of a period of uncertainty until the next group moves in. With the navy likely long gone, the local population can only hope the new raiders are businesspersons rather than wanton murderers.

FORCETT SUBSECTOR

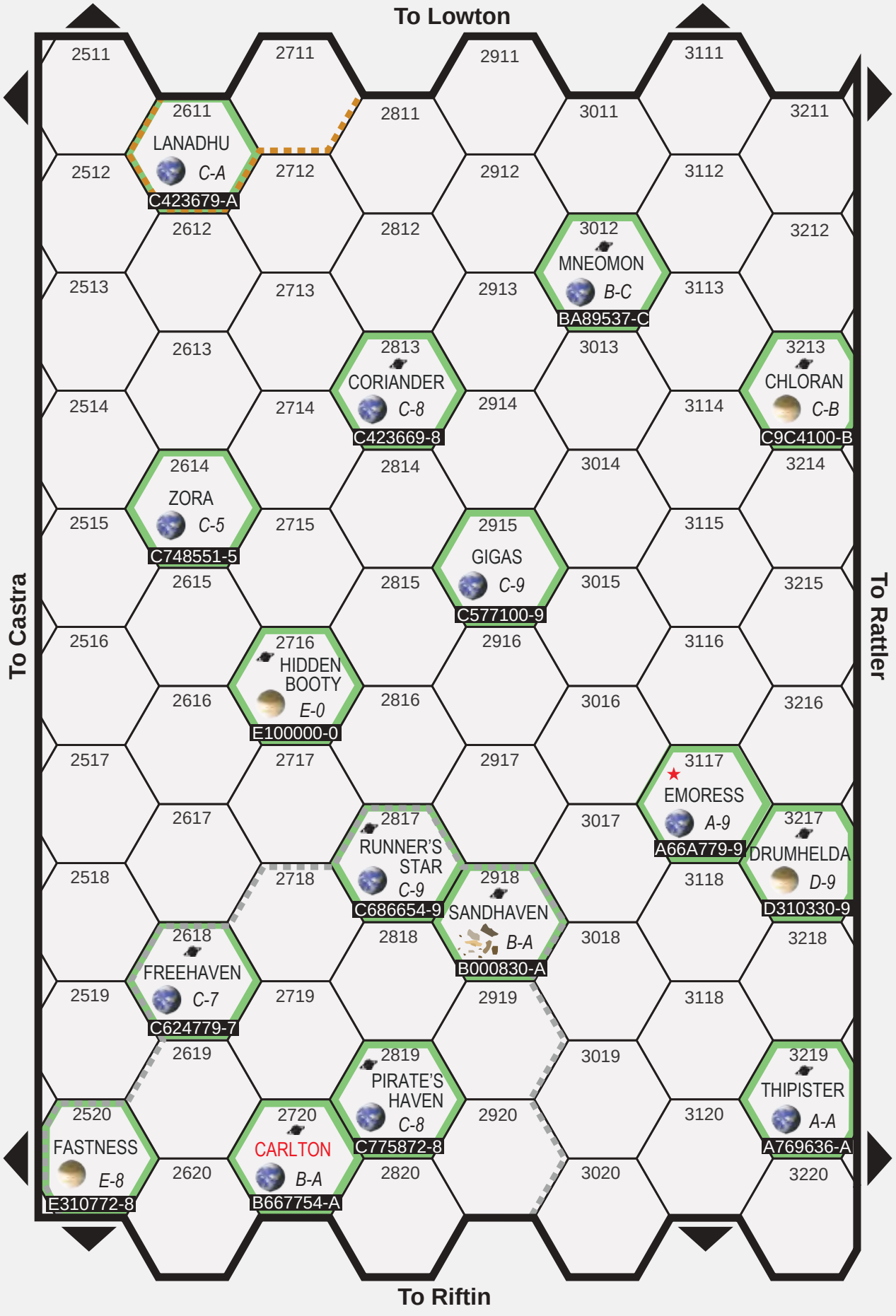
The coreward end of Forcett has a handful of worlds separated by two-parsec gaps. This allows a tenuous link to the Akeena union from the Swanfei Independency. Access to the Renkard Union, the Megusard Corporate and the independent worlds of Renkard and Rattler subsectors is considerably easier. This is a mixed blessing now the Lords of Thunder have reached the borders of the Renkard Union and look set to overrun it in the near future.

The systems surrounding the Swanfei Independency typically have a long history of self-reliance and are not keen on the creation of a multiworld government. The threat of K'Kree dominance has finally caused some to consider forming a defensive alliance or contributing to a joint force. In some cases this means donating money or hardware to the defence of the Renkard Union but since 1091 the Conclave of Emoress has been ongoing. This was originally intended to be a month-long conference to discuss an effective deterrent or counter to the Lords of Thunder and has become an ongoing event with delegates from various worlds and corporate bodies arriving, taking part for a while then withdrawing. A small core of determined supporters have emerged and a joint intelligence and planning operation is now ongoing. This makes Emoress the best place outside the Renkard Union to get a clear picture of what is happening on the fringes of Gateway.

CARLTON

Settled around 2,500 years ago, Carlton is a warm world with wide plains and vast forests, home to 90 million people. As the capital of the Swanfei Independency, Carlton exerts a great deal of influence in the local region. Its ports are free and open, a euphemism for lacking in laws, and are a major centre for the mercenary trade as well as for the trans-shipment of dubious goods. Among the mercenaries and starmercs (mercenary spacer crews) in the port are numerous privateer ships – semi-legitimate warships hired as escorts or freelancing as pirates and smugglers depending upon the economic climate.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Carlton	2720	—	B667754-A	Ag Ga Ri	—	Swanfei	G
Chloran	3213	—	C9C4100-B	Fl Lo	—	—	G
Coriander	2813	—	C423669-8	Na Ni Po	—	—	G
Drumhelda	3217	—	D310330-9	Lo	—	—	G
Emoress	3117	N	A66A779-9	Ri Wa	—	—	—
Fastness	2520	—	E310772-8	Na	—	Swanfei	—
Freehaven	2618	—	C624779-7		—	Swanfei	G
Gigas	2915	—	C577100-9	Lo	—	—	—
Hidden Booty	2716	—	E100000-0	Ba Lt Va	—	—	G
Lanadhu	2611	—	C423679-A	Na Ni Po	—	Akeena	—
Mneomon	3012	—	BA89537-C	Ht Ni	—	—	G
Pirate's Haven	2819	—	C775872-8		—	Swanfei	G
Runner's Star	2817	—	C686654-9	Ag Ni Ga Ri	—	Swanfei	G
Sandhaven	2918	—	B000830-A	As Na Va	—	Swanfei	G
Thipister	3219	—	A769636-A	Ni Ri	—	—	G
Zora	2614	—	C748551-5	Ag Lt Ni	—	—	—


To Lowton
To Castra
To Rattler
To Riftin
2511
2711
2911
3111
2611
LANADHU
C-A
C423679-A
2811
3011
3211
2512
2712
2912
3112
2612
2812
3012
MNEOMON
B-C
BA89537-C
3212
2513
2713
2913
3113
2613
2813
CORIANDER
C-8
C423669-8
3013
3213
CHLORAN
C-B
C9C4100-B
2514
2714
2914
3114
2614
ZORA
C-5
C748551-5
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2715
2915
GIGAS
C-9
C577100-9
3115
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3015
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2516
2716
HIDDEN BOOTY
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E100000-0
2916
3116
2616
2816
3016
3216
2517
2717
2917
3117
EMORESS
A-9
A66A779-9
2617
2817
RUNNER'S STAR
C-9
C686654-9
3017
3217
DRUMHELDA
D-9
D310330-9
2518
2718
2918
SANDHAVEN
B-A
B000830-A
3118
2618
FREEHAVEN
C-7
C624779-7
2818
3018
3218
2519
2719
2919
3118
2619
2819
PIRATE'S HAVEN
C-8
C775872-8
3019
3219
THIPISTER
A-A
A769636-A
2520
FASTNESS
E-8
E310772-8
2720
CARLTON
B-A
B667754-A
2920
3120
2620
2820
3020
3220
Gateway
H
FORCETT SUBSECTOR
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Other Naval Base
Secure System
Akeena Union Border
Swanfel Free Worlds Border
Asteroids (no atmosphere/water)
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)

CARLTON

UWP	B667754–A	
Starport	B	Good
Size	6	9,600km
Atmosphere	6	Standard
Hydrosphere	7	70%
Population	7	Tens of millions
Government Type	5	Feudal Technocracy
Law Level	4	Light assault weapons prohibited
Technology Level	A	Interstellar community

Much of the business on Carlton was founded with money made by pirate bands or from firms serving their needs. However, the passage of many years has allowed most businesses to acquire respectability and legitimacy. Some vestiges of the pirate heritage do remain, for example the freeport nature of the major cities; Carlton Down and the recently-founded but rapidly growing New Haven. System defences are good and while customs inspections are cursory, the authorities do not tolerate piracy. Many dubious merchant ships and some outright pirates use the ports of Carlton with the unspoken understanding that local trade is off-limits.

Carlton's support of piracy is a point of contention with other interstellar polities and at present the Galian Federation has a boycott in place. Its vessels will not enter Free Worlds space, nor trade with ships out of the Free Worlds; in practice this means trade is conducted in neutral ports beyond the borders of the Free Worlds. In recent years Carlton has seen an ever-increasing number of individuals either recruiting mercenary starship operators or representing them. Whilst most want fighting ships, there is a solid market for sneaky intelligence-gatherers or captains willing to run into Lords of Thunder territory and rescue those who want to leave.

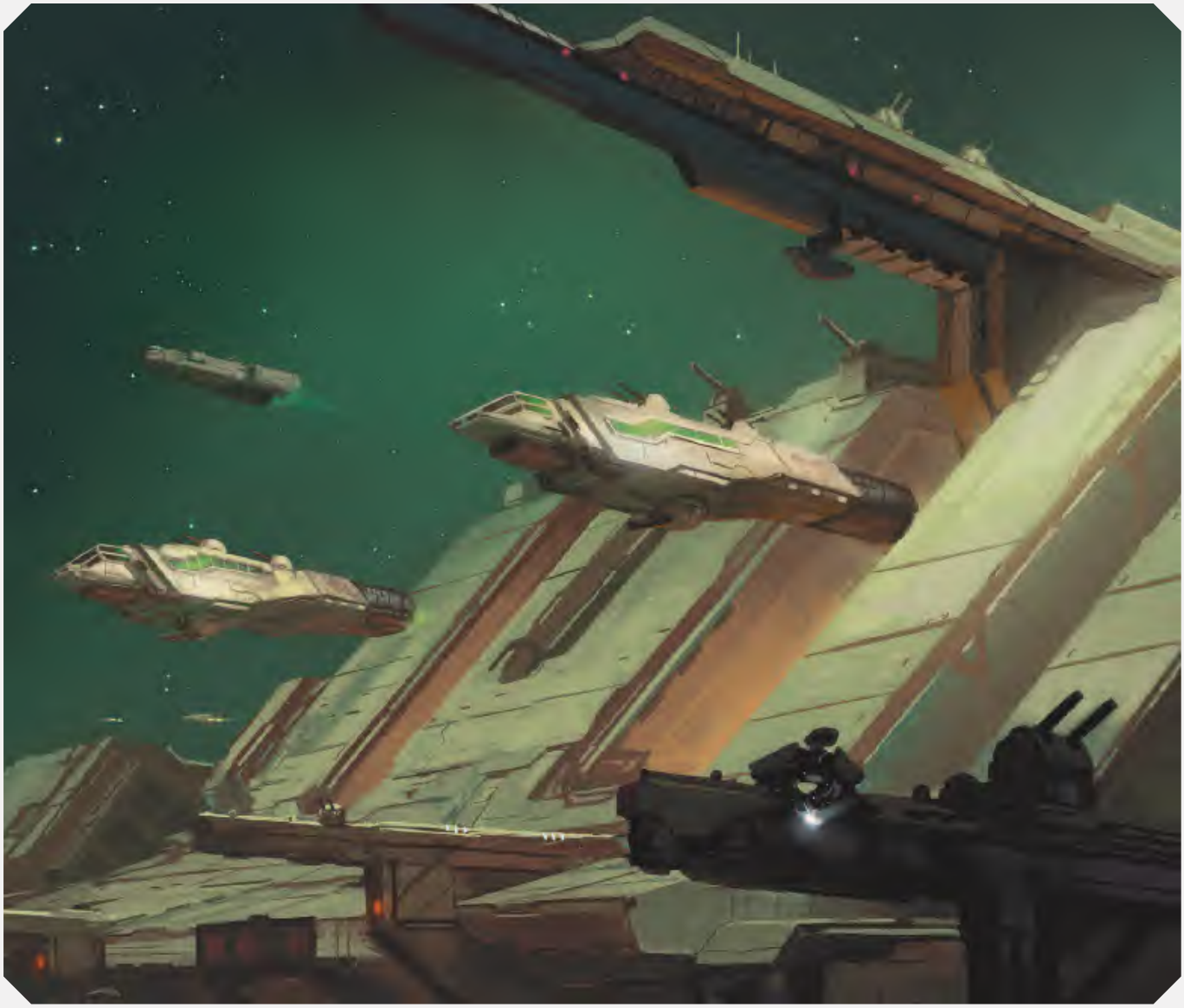
EMORESS

UWP	A66A779–9	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	6	9,600km
Atmosphere	6	Standard
Hydrosphere	A	Water World
Population	7	Tens of millions
Government Type	7	Balkanisation
Law Level	9	Possession of weapons outside the home prohibited
Technology Level	9	Anti-Gravity

EMORESS

Civilisation on Emoress is shaped by the nature of the world. What little useable land there is forms archipelagos and a couple of large islands. Each is a distinct political as well as geographical region with its own downport. The shared highport is impressive for this part of Gateway but is looking run-down. It was built by the Megusard Corporate as part of a plan to expand trade in the region. This did not go as intended and after a couple of decades the backers pulled out. The nations of Emoress cannot afford to maintain their orbital port in its original condition and have sold some of the equipment they inherited. This has left large parts of the port uninhabitable.

Despite this, Emoress is home to the more or less permanent conference known as the Conclave of Emoress. The Conclave provides a significant portion of the port's income either from direct funding or the activities of ships visiting to take part. At any given time there may be representatives from a dozen worlds and small states, mercenary forces, corporations, popular insurgencies and any other group that might conceivably be worried about the Lords of Thunder. Each has a need and a plan, but few have much to offer in terms of resources. A surprisingly effective joint intelligence task force is operated by the Conclave, which pays handsomely for accurate and timely information about K'Kree activities as well as general information on their society, leaders and economic situation.



INDEPENDENT NAVAL BASES

Many worlds are marked on the map as having naval bases but outside the Imperium this can mean different things. A facility capable of operating a couple of wings of fighters and landing supply ships to support them might be considered a naval base. In some cases, bases might be an adjunct to a starport or a small facility elsewhere in the system. They may even be operated by someone other than the system's mainworld government.

The naval base at Emoress, for example, is a collection of modules contributed or paid for by the more well-off supporters of the Conclave. It began as a refuelling and repair station for small vessels engaged in intelligence-gathering runs into the territory of the Lords of Thunder and gradually gained additional facilities and defences. The base can support vessels up to around 1,200 displacement tons but has landing areas for large numbers of craft in addition to multiple wings of fighters. The base provides a training service for pilots and crews destined for service elsewhere – a euphemism for those intent on joining the defence of the Renkard Union.

The base has grown over time and actually generates some revenue for the mainworld government. The Conclave moved to the base from the mainworld's highport, becoming in effect a secondary, diplomatic and military port. It is off-limits to those not taking part in the Conclave or delivering supplies and munitions but a permit to visit is not hard to obtain for anyone with less than six limbs.

ARCONNA SUBSECTOR

The spinward-coreward side of Arconna is very sparse, with Castamaria providing a jump-2 link to the Khuur League. Trade ships out of Tharver make regular runs to the league, refuelling from corporate tankers stationed at Tanis. A similar permanently-temporary arrangement exists at Williwaw to support jump-2 traffic headed towards Far Portal and Phoniwt. This represents a significant volume of trade, enriching the second capital of the Galian Federation at Tharver.

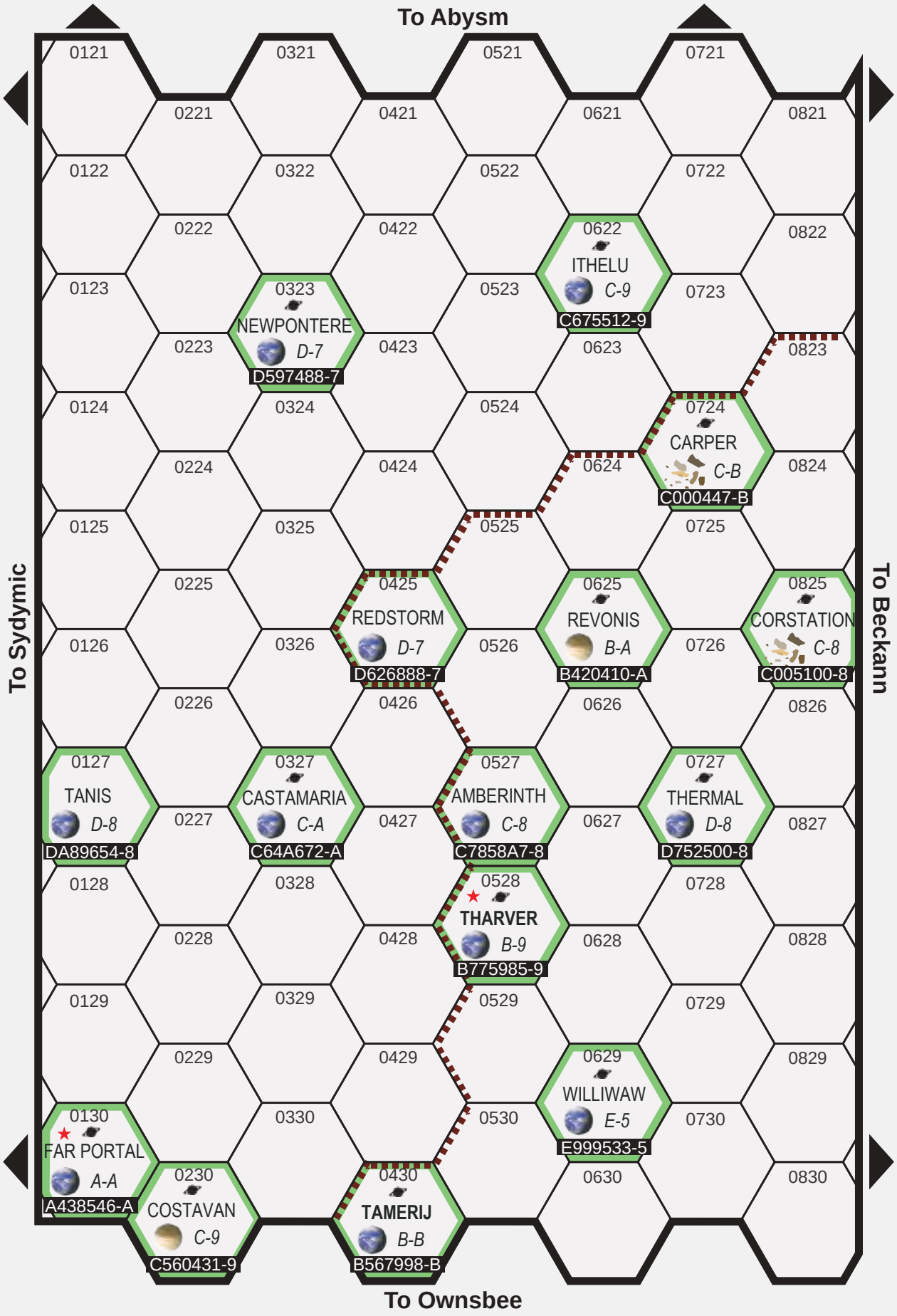
The trailing side of the subsector is within the territory of the Galian Federation. It looks to Tharver as its capital rather than Gateway as a result of the three-parsec gulf running more or less across Federation territory. There are those who believe this half of the Federation should go its own way and some worlds are only token members of the Federation. If this drift towards breakup continues it will surprise no-one; the disintegration of the old Galian Trade Federation was a gradual affair for the most part, and the successor states are anything but internally unified.

FAR PORTAL

The Far Portal system centres on a red giant star which has destroyed its inner system. Far Portal is a moon of the innermost gas giant, enjoying a brief warm period before the star consumes the rest of its planets or begins its final cooling. The time frame involved is sufficiently long that the system might as well have always been as it is now as far as humans are concerned. Whilst the mainworld population of around 800,000 is vastly larger than the numbers of people in the rest of the system, there are a few small cities on various bodies. All are represented to the mainworld government as part of a system-wide state.

Accounts vary as to whether Far Portal was ever part of the Galian Trade League, at least as a full member. When it suits the system government, they play up the link and sometimes use it to claim territories in neighbouring star systems. On other occasions Far Portal denies any connection to the old League – and any affiliation with the Galian Federation that comes with it. This does not mean relations are bad; Far

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Amberinth	0527	—	C7858A7-8	Ga Ri	—	Galian	—
Carper	0724	—	C000447-B	As Ni Va	—	Galian	G
Castamaria	0327	—	C64A672-A	Ni Wa	—	—	G
Corstation	0825	—	C005100-8	As Ic Lo Va	—	Galian	G
Costavan	0230	—	C560431-9	De Ni	—	—	G
Far Portal	0130	N	A438546-A	Ni	—	—	G
Ithelu	0622	—	C675512-9	Ag Ni	—	—	G
Newpontere	0323	—	D597488-7	Ni Pa	—	—	G
Redstorm	0425	—	D626888-7	—	—	Galian	—
Revonis	0625	—	B420410-A	De He Ni Po	—	Galian	G
Tamerij	0430	—	B567998-B	Hi	—	Galian	G
Tanis	0127	—	DA89654-8	Ni Ri	—	—	—
Tharver	0528	N	B775985-9	Hi In	—	Galian	G
Thermal	0727	—	D752500-8	Ni Po	—	Galian	G
Williwaw	0629	—	E999533-5	Lt Ni	—	Galian	G


To Abysm
To Sydymic
To Beckann
To Ownsbee
0121
0321
0521
0721
0221
0421
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0122
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0522
0722
0222
0422
0622
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C675512-9
0822
0123
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NEWPONTERE
D-7
D597488-7
0523
0723
0223
0423
0623
0823
0124
0324
0524
0724
CARPER
C-B
C000447-B
0224
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0125
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0725
0225
0425
REDSTORM
D-7
D626888-7
0625
REVONIS
B-A
B420410-A
0825
CORSTATION
C-8
C005100-8
0126
0326
0526
0726
0226
0426
0626
0826
0127
TANIS
D-8
DA89654-8
0327
CASTAMARIA
C-A
C64A672-A
0527
AMBERINTH
C-8
C7858A7-8
0727
THERMAL
D-8
D752500-8
0227
0427
0627
0827
0128
0328
0528
THARVER
B-9
B775985-9
0728
0228
0428
0628
0828
0129
0329
0529
0729
0229
0429
0629
WILLIWAW
E-5
E999533-5
0829
0130
FAR PORTAL
A-A
A438546-A
0330
0530
0730
0230
COSTAVAN
C-9
C560431-9
0430
TAMERIJ
B-B
B567998-B
0630
0830
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Other Naval Base
Secure System
Galian Federation Border
Asteroids (no athmosphere/water)
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)

FAR PORTAL

UWP	A438546–A	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	4	6,400km
Atmosphere	3	Very thin
Hydrosphere	8	80%
Population	5	Hundreds of thousands
Government Type	4	Representative Democracy
Law Level	6	All firearms except shotguns prohibited
Technology Level	A	Interstellar community

THARVER

UWP	B775985–9	
Starport	B	Good
Size	7	11,200km
Atmosphere	7	Standard; Tainted
Hydrosphere	5	50%
Population	9	Billions
Government Type	8	Civil Service Bureaucracy
Law Level	5	Personal concealable weapons prohibited
Technology Level	9	Anti-Gravity

Portal is an important trade link for the Federation and profits considerably. Its tiny navy proudly patrols the neighbouring systems and conducts joint exercises – it might be better to say tags along with – the navies of Phoniwt and the Federation.

To date Far Portal has resisted Imperial overtures and is not receptive to funding under the Gateway Project. Trade is entirely acceptable of course, allowing some slow insinuation of Imperial interests. However, attempts to hammer out a basing agreement for the Imperial Navy have gone nowhere. Far Portal allows navy ships to use its port for the usual fee and makes no concessions, nor does it recognise the Imperial Navy's jurisdiction in any matter. This has led to the bizarre situation of a Far Portal corvette firing across the bow of an Imperial cruiser and haughtily demanding it leave the vicinity. Such incidents are merely posturing and the Imperial Navy is more likely to produce cartoons of the matter than to shoot back. The locals know better than to push it too far and the Imperials do not want to look like invaders.

THARVER

Tharver was the founder of the Galian Trade League. Its corporations set up many of the colonies in the region and created their industries. However, over time control was lost. Gateway became the capital, then the League broke up. There are many who consider the 'Tharver Half' of the Galian Federation to be almost a separate polity and who dislike receiving instructions from Gateway. Some are also concerned about how friendly Gateway is becoming with the Imperium. Imperial ships and money are welcome at Tharver but distance is maintained. According to rumour at least this is not the case at Gateway. It is possible that the 'Gateway Half' of the Galian Federation may effectively become an Imperial client state whilst Tharver leads a proudly independent Federation.

Despite this wariness towards Imperial intentions, Tharver hosts a small complement of Imperial warships and has a number of Imperial-owned bases in its cities. Relations are cordial but cooperation is agreed as and when rather than assumed. Tharver's own naval assets patrol the worlds of the Federation and parts of Outworld and Ownsbee subsectors as well, protecting its large and ever-expanding trade fleet. Some ambitious merchants

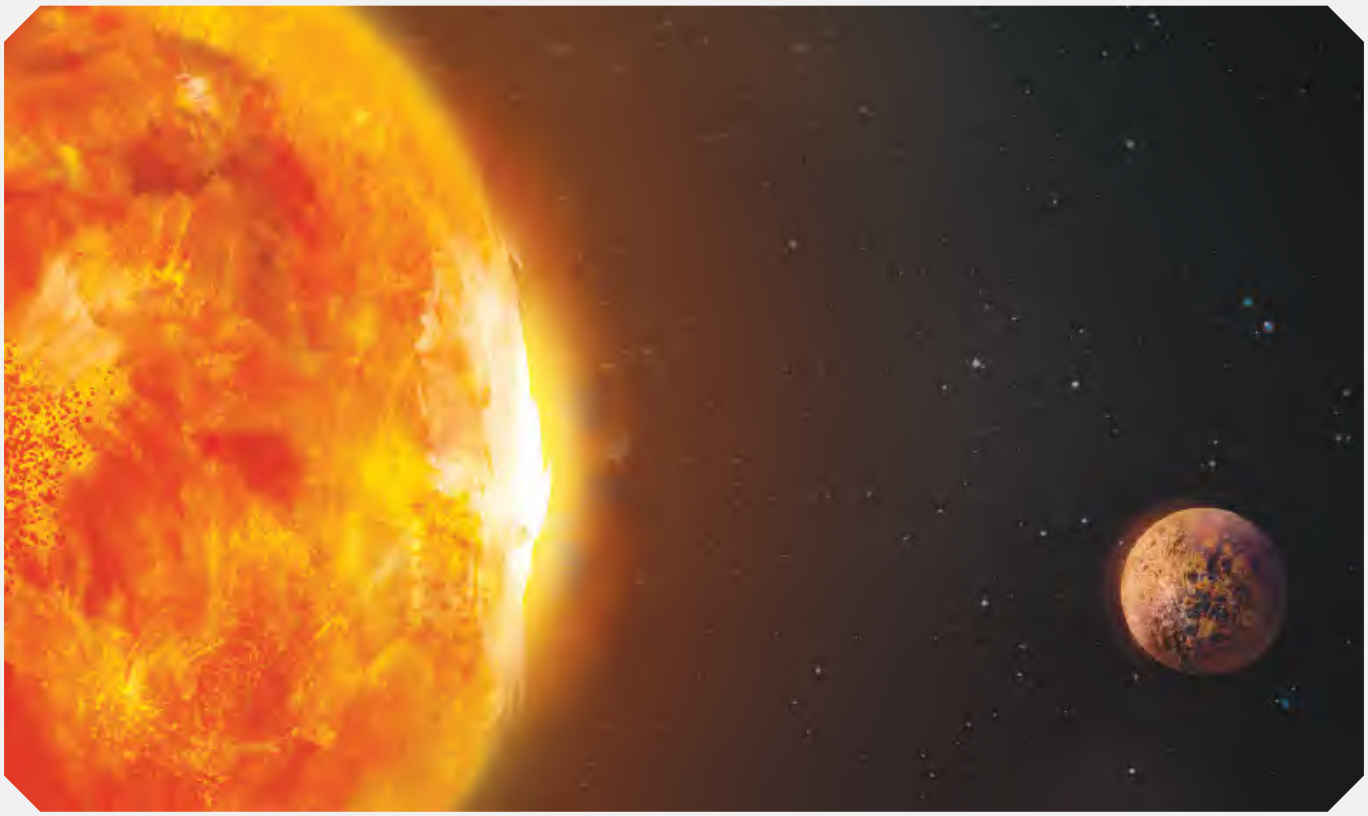
have begun pushing missions far out to trailing and even attempting to open up trade with the Lords of Thunder. This has led to misunderstandings which had unfortunate consequences for those living closer to the Lords of Thunder, with the result that Tharver-registered ships are unwelcome in parts of Gateway.

TRASARIAN FACTORS IN THE GATE

Trasarian Factors was founded in the distant past and has been an institution of the various Galian and Galian-Successor states. It has large holdings in the Galian Federation, the Viyard Concourse and the Trindel Confederacy, which can have an effect on the politics of all three. Trasarian in addition has interests on many worlds. In some cases these have become a liability as the political wind changes, forcing a decision. The firm could sell its assets for whatever it can get and pull out, or it could try to change the situation to make it more viable.

Imperialisation of worlds in The Gate might impact Trasarian's interests there, so it is quietly creating opposition. This is never overt and usually indirect. However, the firm does not mind losing some money – actually, staggering sums by the standards of most planetary economies – in order to win in the long term. It will not directly fund anti-Imperial insurgents, or anything so direct, but will offer a subsidy to a struggling starport until it is dependent, then apply pressure to impair Imperial goods and vessels. Trasarian is also quite happy for others to use funding it has supplied in good faith for economic development to support the anti-Imperial movement.

Trasarian Factors is engaged in what amounts to an economic cold war against the Imperium. Both know it very well but open accusations are not how the game is played. The Imperium could crush Trasarian if it wanted but only by transferring resources currently in use elsewhere. So the game goes on, with both sides sponsoring initiatives or quietly undermining one another. Those who can negotiate this minefield play off both sides and profit greatly but for the most part minor players are simply tools for the two major economic powers of The Gate.



BECKANN SUBSECTOR

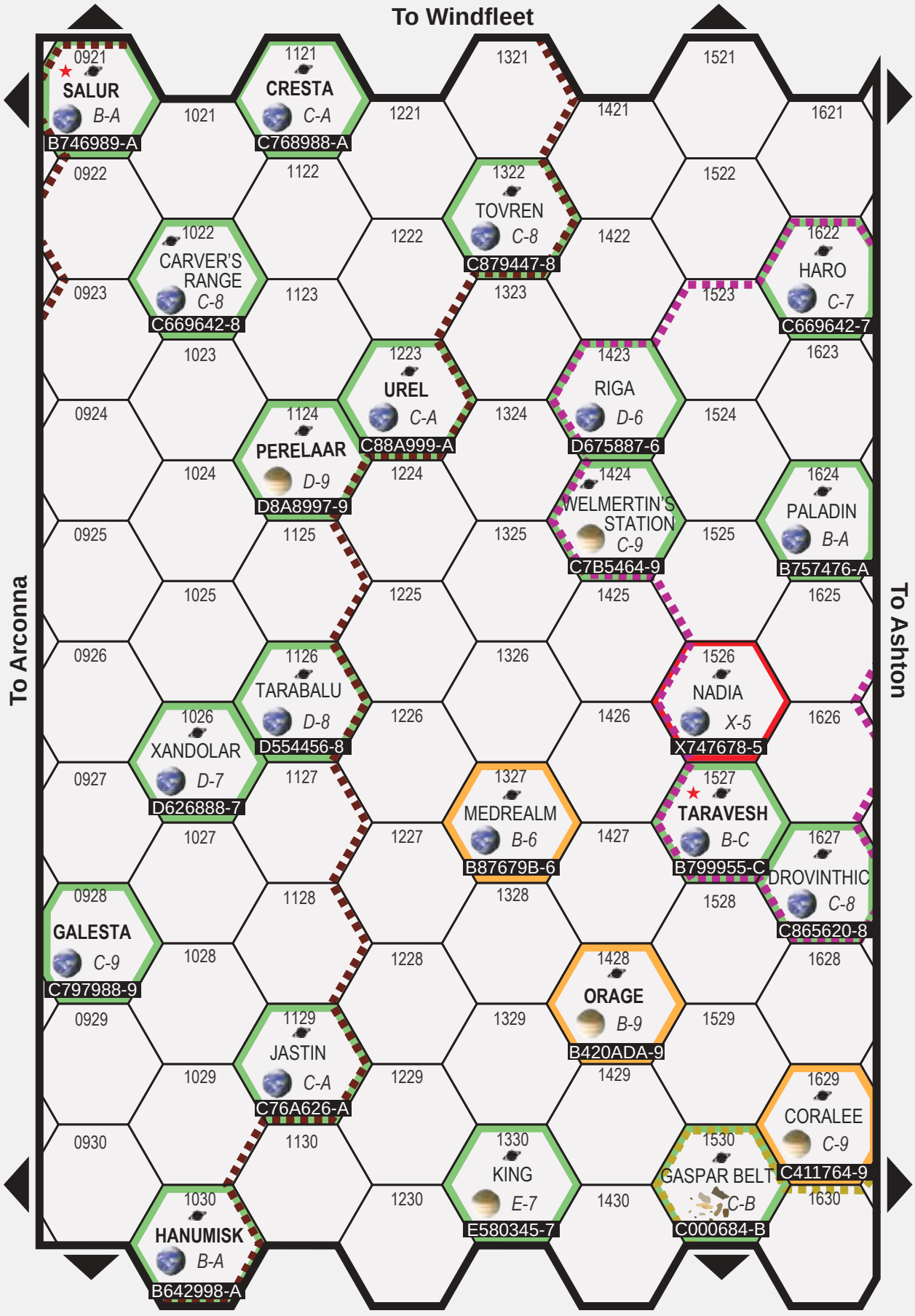
Beckann contains 23 star systems, most of which are part of either the Trindel Confederacy or the Galian Federation. One system belongs to the Viyard Concourse; all others are – at least in theory – independent. In practice most of these worlds are disputed and have at times been fully controlled by one of the regional powers before being lost again.

Beckann is an avenue for commerce between the successor states to the old Galian Trade League, when they are not in dispute over the worlds between. The necessity to maintain interstellar trade links means even on the rare occasions where these states are in open warfare against one another in one system, agreements limit the conflict to that location. These are not always honoured however and commerce-raiding attacks are always a possibility. Freelancers or pirates are sometimes paid to attack the ships of one power and make it look like someone else was responsible. This makes the centre of Beckann an interesting place to do business.

CORALEE

Coralee is a disputed world claimed by both the Trindel Confederacy and the Viyard Concourse. A fairly non-descript planet notable mainly for dryness and lack of atmosphere, Coralee has gained value as a status symbol since being repeatedly claimed in negotiations by Viyard and clung onto by Trindel. Its position in what astrographically should be Viyard space represents a thumbed nose on the part of Trindel and the

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Carver's Range	1022	—	C669642-8	Ni Ri	—	Galian	G
Coralee	1629	—	C411764-9	Ic Na	A	Trindel	G
Cresta	1121	—	C768988-A	Hi	—	Galian	G
Drovinthic	1627	—	C865620-8	Ag Ni Ga Ri	—	Trindel	G
Galesta	0928	—	C797988-9	Hi In	—	Galian	—
Gaspar Belt	1530	—	C000684-B	As Na Ni Va	—	Viyard	G
Hanumisk	1030	—	B642998-A	He Hi In Po	—	Galian	G
Haro	1622	—	C669642-7	Ni Ri	—	Trindel	G
Jastin	1129	—	C76A626-A	Ni Ri Wa	—	Galian	G
King	1330	—	E580345-7	De Lo	—	—	G
Medrealm	1327	—	B87679B-6	Ag	A	—	G
Nadia	1526	—	X747678-5	Ag Lt Ni	R	Trindel	G
Orage	1428	—	B420ADA-9	De Hi In Lt Na Po	A	—	G
Paladin	1624	—	B757476-A	Ni Ga	—	Trindel	G
Perelaar	1124	—	D8A8997-9	Fl Hi In	—	Galian	G
Riga	1423	—	D675887-6	—	—	Trindel	—
Salur	0921	N	B746989-A	Hi In	—	Galian	G
Tarabalu	1126	—	D554456-8	Ni	—	Galian	G
Taravesh	1527	N	B799955-C	Hi Ht In	—	Trindel	G
Tovren	1322	—	C879447-8	Ni	—	Galian	G
Urel	1223	—	C88A999-A	Hi Wa	—	Galian	G
Welmertin's Station	1424	—	C7B5464-9	Fl Ni	—	Trindel	G
Xandolar	1026	—	D626888-7	—	—	Galian	G



Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
★ Other Naval Base

Secure System
Red Zone
Galian Federation Border
Trindel Confederacy Border

Asteroids (no atmosphere/water)
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)
Viyard Concourse Border

CORALEE

UWP	C411764–9	
Starport	C	Routine
Size	4	6,400km
Atmosphere	1	Trace
Hydrosphere	1	10%
Population	7	Tens of millions
Government Type	6	Captive Government / Colony
Law Level	4	Light assault weapons prohibited
Technology Level	9	Anti-Gravity

Confederacy is determined to keep the system as a symbol of defiance. Possession of Coralee would not gain Viyard any significant navigational advantages. Ships en route from Viyard to Ariel or Gaspar Belt would take just as long to get there via Coralee as via Umbrin. However, it would deprive the Trindel Confederacy of a convenient marshalling point for an attack into Viyard space, a consideration that means more to Viyard than Trindel.

The world itself is home to some 60 million souls, most of whom are housed in cities situated close to the world's few liquid seas. These are mainly found in deep depressions in the surface, so they are somewhat isolated from one another. Maglev tubeways link some cities but most travel is by grav vehicle. It has been suggested that Coralee may have had a thicker atmosphere and more water at some time, having lost both in some ancient cataclysm such as an asteroid impact. This theory remains unproven.

The system is defended by an assortment of vessels on loan from various world governments in the Confederacy. Sovereignty is frequently challenged by Concourse ships out of Viyard or Umbrin and it seems likely that if there is ever a shooting war between Trindel and Viyard, Coralee will be the flashpoint or an early battleground. It is remotely possible a negotiated settlement will be reached but both sides have made much of possessing Coralee and would lose face by giving up their claim.

TARAVESH

UWP	B799955–C	
Starport	B	Good
Size	7	11,200km
Atmosphere	9	Dense; Tainted
Hydrosphere	9	90%
Population	9	Billions
Government Type	5	Feudal Technocracy
Law Level	5	Personal concealable weapons prohibited
Technology Level	C	Average Imperial

TARAVESH

A wet world with a dense atmosphere, Taravesh is one of the main driving forces in the Trindel Confederacy's economy. Capable of building TL12 starships, Taravesh has a purely military shipyard located in orbit around one of the system's gas giants. Raw materials are mined in the system's belts and on gas giant moons, processed at an orbital facility then shipped out to the yards aboard large in-system freighters. These are an obvious target for sabotage or a deniable pirate raid so are provided a security detachment. All transports have the capability to carry a defensive module, although most do not have one fitted. Those that do gain a modest missile and point-defence armament and the capability to operate a handful of fighters. This is considered sufficient to make a raid risky which is usually all it takes to deter potential aggressors.

Taravesh is one of the three sub-state capitals of the Confederacy, claiming Nadia, Drovinthic and Welmertin's Station as its subordinates. Taravesh has also tried to exert control over Coralee but this is disputed by Trindel and Ashton. As a consequence, Taravesh has threatened to withdraw its forces holding the Coralee system, greatly weakening the Confederacy's hold over the new territory and has entered into negotiations with the Viyard Concourse over a buffer-state independency deal. This is more likely to be a gambit in the Confederacy's internal politics than a serious measure but diplomats from Taravesh have begun shuttling back and forth into Viyard space – to the great displeasure of the rest of the Confederacy.

C2H-SP (CATCH-BOOT)

The creature designated C2H-SP was first observed on a planetoid in an unknown system, quite possibly beyond Gateway. It is thought to have been brought to the region aboard or possibly attached to the hull of Rule of Man-era colony ships. The designation stands for Class Two Hazard – Suspected Psionic, which has somehow been mangled into catch-boot by those who have encountered these creatures.

The catch-boot is a mollusc like creature capable of surviving in total vacuum for an indefinite period. It feeds on any source of carbon it can obtain, extending tendrils through its leathery outer shell to feed and anchor itself to rock or any other hard surface. The creature will lie almost entirely dormant for years, or even decades, and can survive a jumpspace transit attached to a ship's hull. It normally obtains food by a filter process but can bite with a serrated hard area on one end of its shell. Hapless Travellers who get a boot caught may be trapped long enough for their suit to be punctured, at which point the horror begins.

The catch-boot will extend tendrils into any wound opened in a boot or any other point of contact, pumping neurotoxic chemicals into the target. This produces a reaction ranging from catatonia to euphoria, during which the victim may expire from vacuum exposure. If not, the toxins will kill them sooner or later, and the catch-boot's tendrils will grow through their body to consume the bounty of carbon-based matter. Once sufficiently fed the creature will reproduce asexually, creating a colony.

Catch-boots are most at home in Trace or Very Thin atmospheres, suggesting those on vacuum worlds and planetoids got there accidentally. Travellers coming close to one may feel a sense of directionless unease, which ironically makes it more likely they will step on one of the camouflaged creatures as they look around for threats. If one is attached to a ship in jump space, everyone aboard is likely to experience severe nightmares and headaches, which can trigger psychotic episodes. It is not clear if this is a psionic effect or another phenomenon.

Little is known about these creatures, other than they are highly dangerous and rather disturbing. The few scientists who have done more than dissect one claim the catch-boot may have an infinite or extremely long life span and they could have been transported over a very wide area aboard ships of the Vilani Imperium or the Ancients.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
C2H-SP	10	0m
Skills	None	
Attacks	Bite (2D)	
Traits	Armour (+4), Psionic (8), Small (-3)	
Behaviour	Omnivore, Filter	

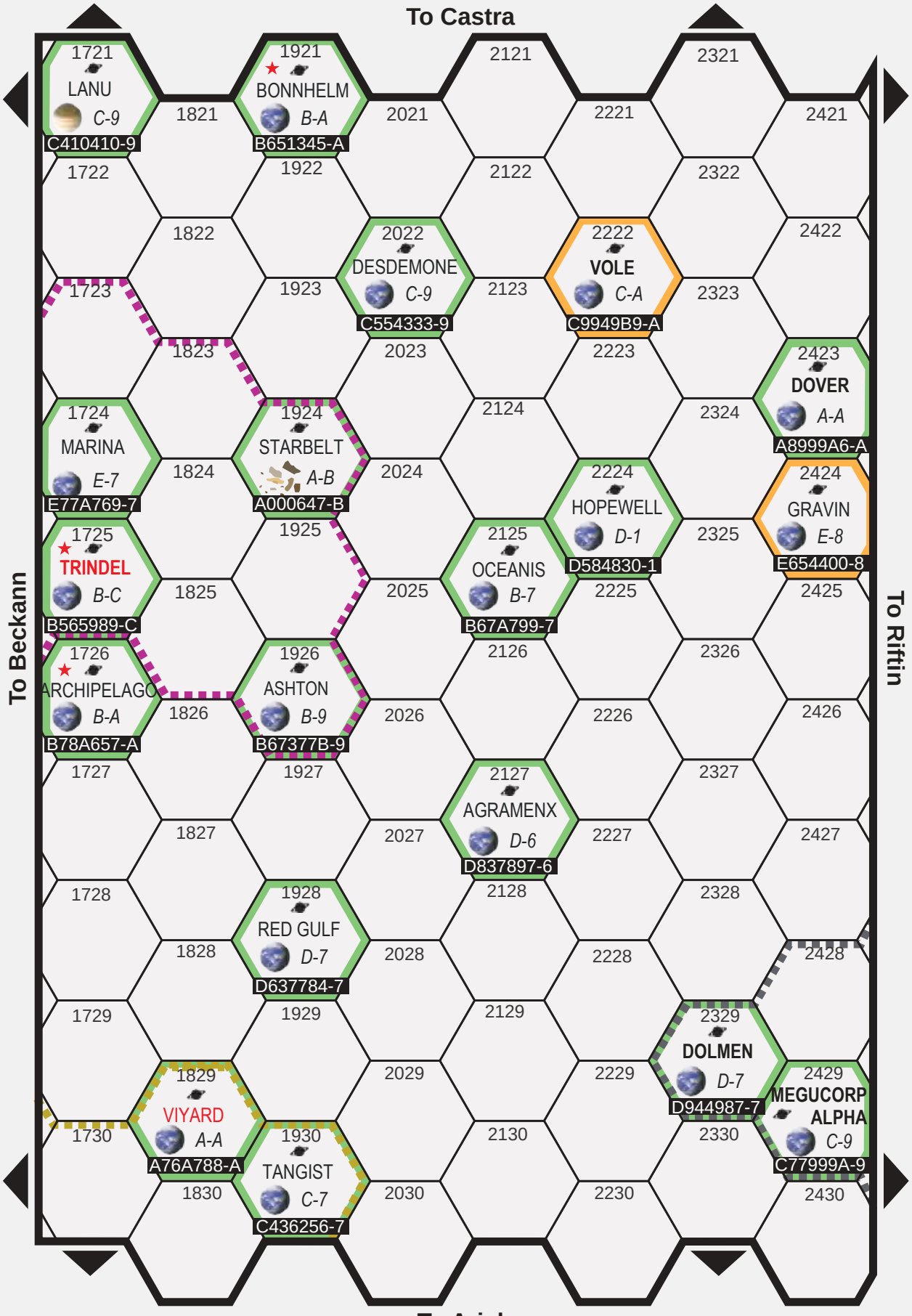
ASHTON SUBSECTOR

About half the star systems of Ashton are part of the Trindel Confederacy, the Viyard Concourse or the Megusard Corporate. The remainder are independent. Low stellar density in the trailing-rimward corner of the subsector limits contact between Megusard and Viyard, with ships plying between Megusard and Trindel typically taking a long route through Riftin subsector. The Trindel Confederacy is thus the most influential power in the subsector and if not distracted by other events will eventually annex the independents along its trailing fringe.

K'Kree ships have been sighted in Ashton with increasing frequency over the past 20 years or so. There have always been occasional expeditions or trade missions but larger groups of ships have been seen far more often since the Lords of Thunder began approaching the borders of the Renkard Union. These groupings usually break up at key points and send trade missions to various worlds before reforming. There are rumours the Lords of Thunder are using these movements to conceal the actual number of ships they have in the area and are seeking to obtain a forward base by economic infiltration. An increase in insurgency and dissidence seems to have accompanied the K'Kree traders but they deny any knowledge of the foolish bickering of non-K'Kree.

The supercorporation Four Sectors Arms more or less owns the world of Bonnhelm. The planet itself is unimportant and home to just a few thousand individuals but the system's location on a natural jump-2 route across the sector makes it an ideal trade nexus. The orbital installation at Bonnhelm is officially known as Bonnhelm High but is generally referred to by the system name as the orbital installation is essentially the system mainworld and the planet is irrelevant.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Agramenx	2127	—	D837897-6	—	—	—	G
Archipelago	1726	N	B78A657-A	Ni Ri Wa	—	—	G
Ashton	1926	—	B67377B-9	—	—	Trindel	G
Bonnhelm	1921	N	B651345-A	Lo Po	—	—	G
Desdemone	2022	—	C554333-9	Lo	—	—	G
Dolmen	2329	—	D944987-7	Hi In	—	Megusard	G
Dover	2423	—	A8999A6-A	Hi In	—	—	G
Gravin	2424	—	E654400-8	Ni	A	—	G
Hopewell	2224	—	D584830-1	Ri	—	—	G
Lanu	1721	—	C410410-9	Ni	—	—	G
Marina	1724	—	E77A769-7	Wa	—	Trindel	G
Megucorp Alpha	2429	—	C77999A-9	Hi In	—	Megusard	G
Oceanis	2125	—	B67A799-7	Wa	—	—	G
Red Gulf	1928	—	D637784-7	—	—	—	G
Starbelt	1924	—	A000647-B	As Na Ni Va	—	Trindel	G
Tangist	1930	—	C436256-7	Lo	—	Viyard	G
Trindel	1725	N	B565989-C	Hi	—	Trindel	G
Viyard	1829	—	A76A788-A	Ri Wa	—	Viyard	G
Vole	2222	—	C9949B9-A	Hi In	A	—	G


To Castra
To Beckann
To Riftin
To Ariel
1721
LANU
C-9
C410410-9
1921
BONNHELM
B-A
B651345-A
2121
2321
1821
2021
2221
2421
1722
1922
2122
2322
1822
2022
DESDEMONE
C-9
C554333-9
2222
VOLE
C-A
C9949B9-A
2422
1723
1923
2123
2323
1823
2023
2223
2423
DOVER
A-A
A8999A6-A
1724
MARINA
E-7
E77A769-7
1924
STARBELT
A-B
A000647-B
2124
2324
1824
2024
2224
HOPEWELL
D-1
D584830-1
2424
GRAVIN
E-8
E654400-8
1725
TRINDEL
B-C
B565989-C
1925
2125
OCEANIS
B-7
B67A799-7
2325
1825
2025
2225
2425
1726
ARCHIPELAGO
B-A
B78A657-A
1926
ASHTON
B-9
B67377B-9
2126
2326
1826
2026
2226
2426
1727
1927
2127
AGRAMENX
D-6
D837897-6
2327
1827
2027
2227
2427
1728
1928
RED GULF
D-7
D637784-7
2128
2328
1828
2028
2228
2428
1729
1929
2129
2329
DOLMEN
D-7
D944987-7
1829
VIYARD
A-A
A76A788-A
2029
2229
2429
MEGUCORP
ALPHA
C-9
C77999A-9
1730
1930
TANGIST
C-7
C436256-7
2130
2330
1830
2030
2230
2430
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Other Naval Base
Trindel Confederacy Border
Secure System
Amber Zone
Viyard Concourse Border
Megusard Corporate Border
Asteroids
(no atmosphere/water)
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)

Four Sectors Arms has a modest in-system defence force and a few armed traders but mostly sells to ships passing through the system. It has clients on many independent worlds as well as the main regional powers and maintains generally cordial relations with all of them. There are few restrictions on what Four Sectors Arms will sell, nor to whom, and it is common knowledge the corporation meddles in planetary affairs as far afield as Crucis Margin when there is a profit to be made. Four Sectors Arms aims to create a sustained demand for weaponry, which translates to many long-term conflicts rather than a single short, victorious campaign. It has an interest in keeping the region divided and troubled but not sufficiently enough to cause an economic collapse. To this end, Four Sectors will occasionally act to end a conflict rather than prolonging it beyond the point where it is most lucrative.

DOVER

Dover is a generally habitable world colonised during the Rule of Man, which retained spaceflight throughout the Long Night but did not return to interstellar capability until the mid-400s. Its billion or so inhabitants have been ruled by a series of dictators since the collapse of a democratic government in 944. Control over the population was supposed to be enhanced by a ban on personal weapon ownership but this has backfired in places. Disarming a population used to owning weapons proved an extremely difficult task, with militias resisting the effort in some areas. A combination of penalties and inducements have brought most of the populace into line, with some segments of society still ignoring the edict to turn in their guns.

Dover's excellent starport lies on the rather roundabout jump-2 route between Trindel and Carlton and whilst the world cannot build jump-2 ships itself it operates a few freightliners using imported drives. Tensions between Dover and the Swanfei Independency are increased by sporadic raids which the Independency completely fails to condemn or control. At the same time emissaries from Carlton are quick to protest when a Dover ship fires on a suspect vessel, even in the Dover system. This is having the effect of pushing Dover into the Trindel camp, with a real chance it will apply for membership of the Confederacy in the near future.

DOVER

UWP	A8999A6–A	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	8	12,800km
Atmosphere	9	Dense; Tainted
Hydrosphere	9	90%
Population	9	Billions
Government Type	A	Charismatic Dictator
Law Level	6	All firearms except shotguns prohibited
Technology Level	A	Interstellar community

GRAVIN

Gravin is very much a backwater world which sees little interstellar traffic. Neighbouring Dover apparently has no interest in extending its territory into the Gravin system and since it is not really on the way to anywhere, Gravin remains something of an irrelevance. This was not always the case and there are signs of human habitation in the distant past – probably the Ziru Sirka era. The ruins of a small city are said to exist, surrounded by a once cultivated hinterland. Apparently a few thousand people once dwelled on Gravin, they must have had spacecraft as there are clear signs of landing areas and with no other indications of habitation these people cannot have been native.

The subject has not received much attention given the remote location of the site but the few researchers who have visited claim they found obviously human artefacts, some bearing inscriptions in Vilani. The current best-guess is that Gravin was some kind of forward base to support exploration of the region, or perhaps a colony set up by a misjumped vessel. If so, theirs must have been a lonely existence with no prospect of returning home or being found. It is possible that the wreckage of a starship found drifting in the Finestre system is related to this settlement. That ship was said to have been built for humans but was equipped with a badly deteriorated and rather primitive jump drive. The current location of the wreck is unknown.

GRAVIN

UWP	E654400–8	
Starport	E	Frontier Installation
Size	6	9,600km
Atmosphere	5	Thin
Hydrosphere	4	40%
Population	4	Tens of thousands
Government Type	0	No Government Structure
Law Level	0	No prohibitions
Technology Level	8	Quality Computers

WRECKS AND RUINED CITIES

The patchy history of Gateway means many colony missions were simply forgotten about, including some secondary expansions from colonies that were at the time doing quite well. The discovery of evidence that a given world was once inhabited rarely causes much excitement; the go-to explanation is colonists landed there and established a community that faded away over time. In a few cases, closer inspection has produced a different explanation or led to a more intriguing mystery.

It is possible there are Vilani Imperium-era ruins on some worlds, or even that some Vilani populations were established and survived long enough to be incorporated into the Rule of Man-era colonies. The Vilani are not known to have deliberately pushed out this far and reaching the middle of Gateway would be quite an undertaking with the technology of the time. However, it is entirely possible ships could have misjumped and been unable to return home.

Another theory is currently enjoying a resurgence of popularity. Perhaps the Ancients seeded some unknown human group on the worlds of Gateway shortly before their Final War. What might have become of these people; could their communities have survived into the modern era in some form? This idea forms the basis of an even wilder suggestion which a small band of scientists and Ancients hunters are trying to prove.

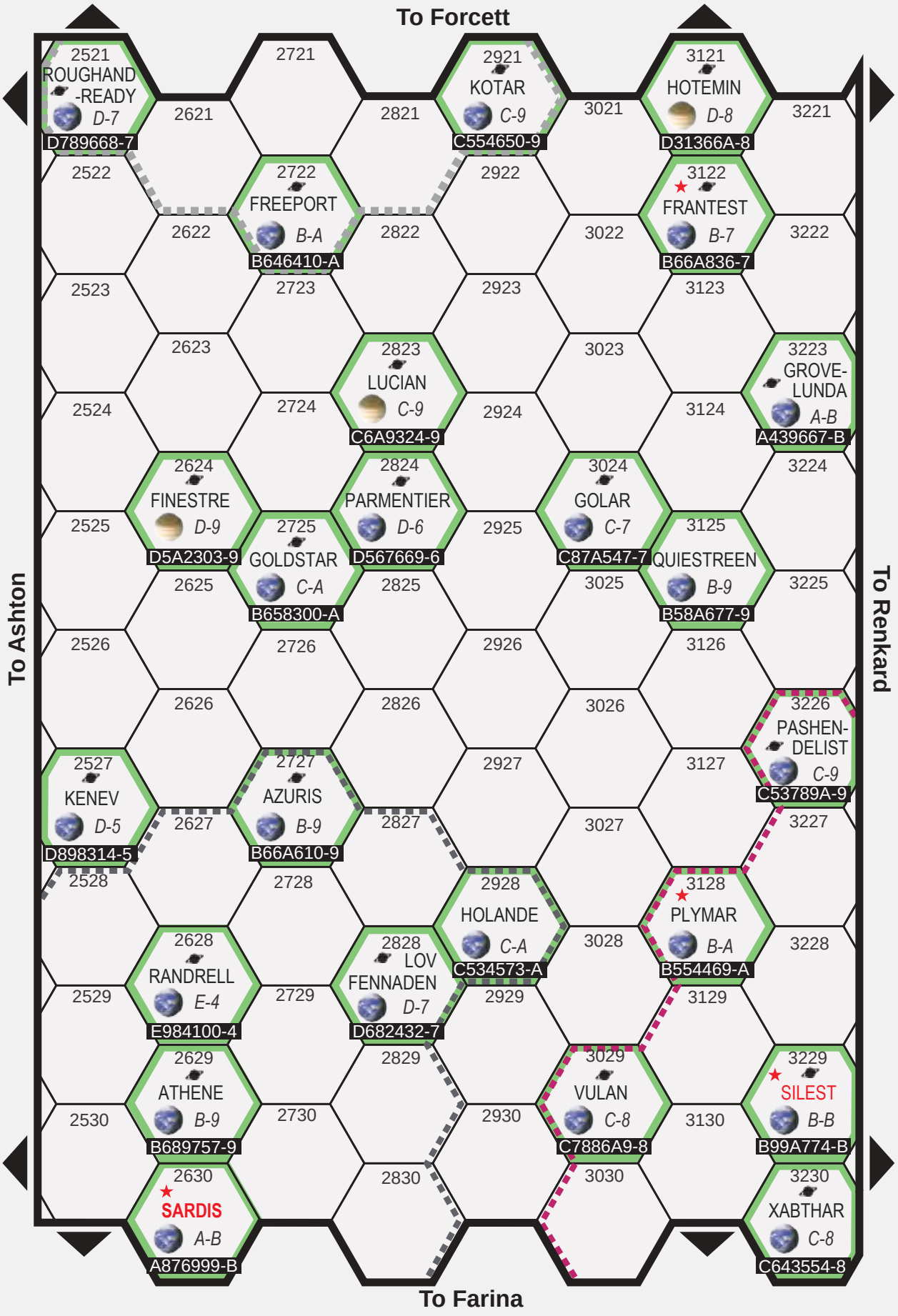
According to this group, a human population may have rebelled against their masters in the last years before the Ancients' Final War, stealing ships and filling them with equipment before heading to the furthest reaches of Gateway. This leads naturally to the idea that there were free humans with access to Ancients technology in Gateway 300.000 years ago and they may have left behind a game-changing stash of technology or starships. The idea has few adherents but they are fervent, leading to small 'gold rushes' as evidence is found on some remote moon or corner of a backwater world. There is no reason to suppose there is any truth behind the theory, however.

RIFTIN SUBSECTOR

The primary astrographic features of Riftin are the rather grandly titled Silest Main, which forms the backbone of the Renkard Union and the four-system Goldstar Cluster. Jump-2 transit to trailing is relatively easy whilst wider gaps make contact to spinward more of a problem. This natural astrographic break is generally thought to guide the strategy of the Lords of Thunder. It is expected they will advance rapidly through the Renkard Union, then more slowly into the subsector's main stellar groupings. This will, most experts think, be followed by a period of consolidation and pacification. Small-scale advances may occur but the expected sudden surge forward should stop at Megucorp Alpha. This is not much comfort for the people of Riftin.

The primary economic factors in the subsector are Megusard and Renkard, although Megusard is far more politically influential. The Renkard Union has traditionally been anything but unified, considerably limiting its political weight. With the developing threat to trailing this has dwindled to almost nothing, although trade ships continue to ply back and forth. These days, Renkard is a major market for naval and military hardware, with ships coming from across the sector and the Imperium. Some weapons arrive as aid but most have a price tag attached. It may be that even if the Renkard Union survives it will collapse under the weight of debt to the arms market.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Athene	2629	—	B689757-9	Ri	—	Megusard	G
Azuris	2727	—	B66A610-9	Ni Ri Wa	—	Megusard	G
Finestre	2624	—	D5A2303-9	Fl Lo	—	—	G
Frantest	3122	N	B66A836-7	Ri Wa	—	—	G
Freeport	2722	—	B646410-A	Ni	—	Swanfei	G
Golar	3024	—	C87A547-7	Ni Wa	—	—	G
Goldstar	2725	—	B658300-A	Lo	—	—	G
Grovelunda	3223	—	A439667-B	Ni	—	—	G
Holande	2928	—	C534573-A	Ni	—	Megusard	—
Hotemin	3121	—	D31366A-8	Ic Na Ni	—	—	G
Kenev	2527	—	D898314-5	Lo Lt	—	—	G
Kotar	2921	—	C554650-9	Ag Ni	—	Swanfei	G
Lov Fennaden	2828	—	D682432-7	Ni	—	Megusard	G
Lucian	2823	—	C6A9324-9	Fl Lo	—	—	G
Parmentier	2824	—	D567669-6	Ag Ni Ri	—	—	G
Pashendelist	3226	—	C53789A-9	—	—	Renkard	G
Plymar	3128	N	B554469-A	Ni	—	Renkard	—
Quiestreen	3125	—	B58A677-9	Ni Ri Wa	—	—	—
Randrell	2628	—	E984100-4	Lo	—	Megusard	G
RoughandReady	2521	—	D789668-7	Ni Ri	—	Swanfei	G
Sardis	2630	N	A876999-B	Hi In	—	Megusard	—
Silest	3229	N	B99A774-B	Wa Cx	—	Renkard	G
Vulan	3029	—	C7886A9-8	Ag Ni Ri	—	Renkard	G
Xabthar	3230	—	C643554-8	Ni Po	—	Renkard	G


To Forcett
To Ashton
To Renkard
To Farina
2521
ROUGHAND
-READY
D-7
D789668-7
2721
2921
KOTAR
C-9
C554650-9
3121
HOTEMIN
D-8
D31366A-8
2621
2821
3021
3221
2522
2722
FREEPORT
B-A
B646410-A
2922
3122
FRANTEST
B-7
B66A836-7
2622
2822
3022
3222
2523
2723
2923
3123
2623
2823
LUCIAN
C-9
C6A9324-9
3023
3223
GROVE-
LUNDA
A-B
A439667-B
2524
2724
2924
3124
2624
FINESTRE
D-9
D5A2303-9
2824
PARMENTIER
D-6
D567669-6
3024
GOLAR
C-7
C87A547-7
3224
2525
2725
GOLDSTAR
C-A
B658300-A
2925
3125
QUIESTREEN
B-9
B58A677-9
2625
2825
3025
3225
2526
2726
2926
3126
2626
2826
3026
3226
PASHEN-
DELIST
C-9
C53789A-9
2527
KENEV
D-5
D898314-5
2727
AZURIS
B-9
B66A610-9
2927
3127
2627
2827
3027
3227
2528
2728
2928
HOLANDE
C-A
C534573-A
3128
PLYMAR
B-A
B554469-A
2628
RANDRELL
E-4
E984100-4
2828
LOV
FENNADEN
D-7
D682432-7
3028
3228
2529
2729
2929
3129
2629
ATHENE
B-9
B689757-9
2829
3029
VULAN
C-8
C7886A9-8
3229
SILEST
B-B
B99A774-B
2530
2730
2930
3130
2630
SARDIS
A-B
A876999-B
2830
3030
3230
XABTHAR
C-8
C643554-8
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Other Naval Base
Secure System
Swanfel Free Worlds Border
Megusard Corporate Border
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)
Renkard Union Border

ATHENE

Athene is a very wet world, with deep oceans teeming with life. Some indigenous species are large and quite dangerous – ocean-going megafauna can pose a threat to a submarine and are kept away from inhabited areas by maritime units of the Defence Force. The main maritime training facility of the Megusard Corporate's Defence Force is located on Athene and gains regular live-fire training courtesy of the world's aquatic life. Athene is something of a breadbasket for the Megusard Corporate, with excellent growing conditions on its small land masses. Although only 10% of the planet is above sea level this is still a lot of land and much of it is good farming country. Vast farms employ a large number of personnel from the coastal and island towns and from them bulk cargo vessels ship produce to the worlds of the Corporate.

The population of some 10 million or so live in three large city-states and a number of smaller settlements. Two cities are underwater while the third, Athene Prime, is located on an equatorial island and is both the world's downport and capital. Most smaller settlements are constructed on islands or the shores of larger land masses. Rather than a strict bureaucratic government system, Athene has a complex administrative system based on factionalisation and control of key industries. Workers' organisations in key industries each have representatives on the planetary government and often find themselves at odds over issues like budget, social programs and education. This system arose as a result of corruption among the leaders some years ago; a period of power-brokering and internal dissent resulted in a new power structure that works reasonably well but is hamstrung by too many vested interests and an excess of checks and balances that prevents much actually getting done.

ATHENE

UWP	B689757–9	
Starport	B	Good
Size	6	9,600km
Atmosphere	8	Dense
Hydrosphere	9	90%
Population	7	Tens of millions
Government Type	5	Feudal Technocracy
Law Level	7	Shotguns prohibited
Technology Level	9	Anti-Gravity

SARDIS

Sardis is the seat of government for the Megusard Corporate and the location of most company headquarters, the main banks and other critical institutions. It is also the headquarters for the Corporate Defence Force, which is based out of Sardis' larger artificial moon, Saina. Saina is a large planetoid, one of just a handful of such bodies in the system which was captured and brought into orbit over the mainworld several centuries ago. The naval base has been gradually extended over the years and is now a formidable fortress equipped with prototype meson guns buried in armoured bunkers, with particle accelerators and missile launchers in installations scattered over the surface. Saina houses the Defence Force space training facility as well as maintenance and berthing facilities for most of the fleet.

Although its standard atmosphere is tainted badly enough to require a mask, Sardis is a fairly pleasant world to live on. It was settled early in the human expansion into Gateway and has grown into a major economic and industrial centre. Products from the

SARDIS

UWP	A876999–B	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	8	12,800km
Atmosphere	7	Standard; Tainted
Hydrosphere	6	60%
Population	9	Billions
Government Type	9	Impersonal Bureaucracy
Law Level	9	Possession of weapons outside the home prohibited
Technology Level	B	Lower Average Imperial

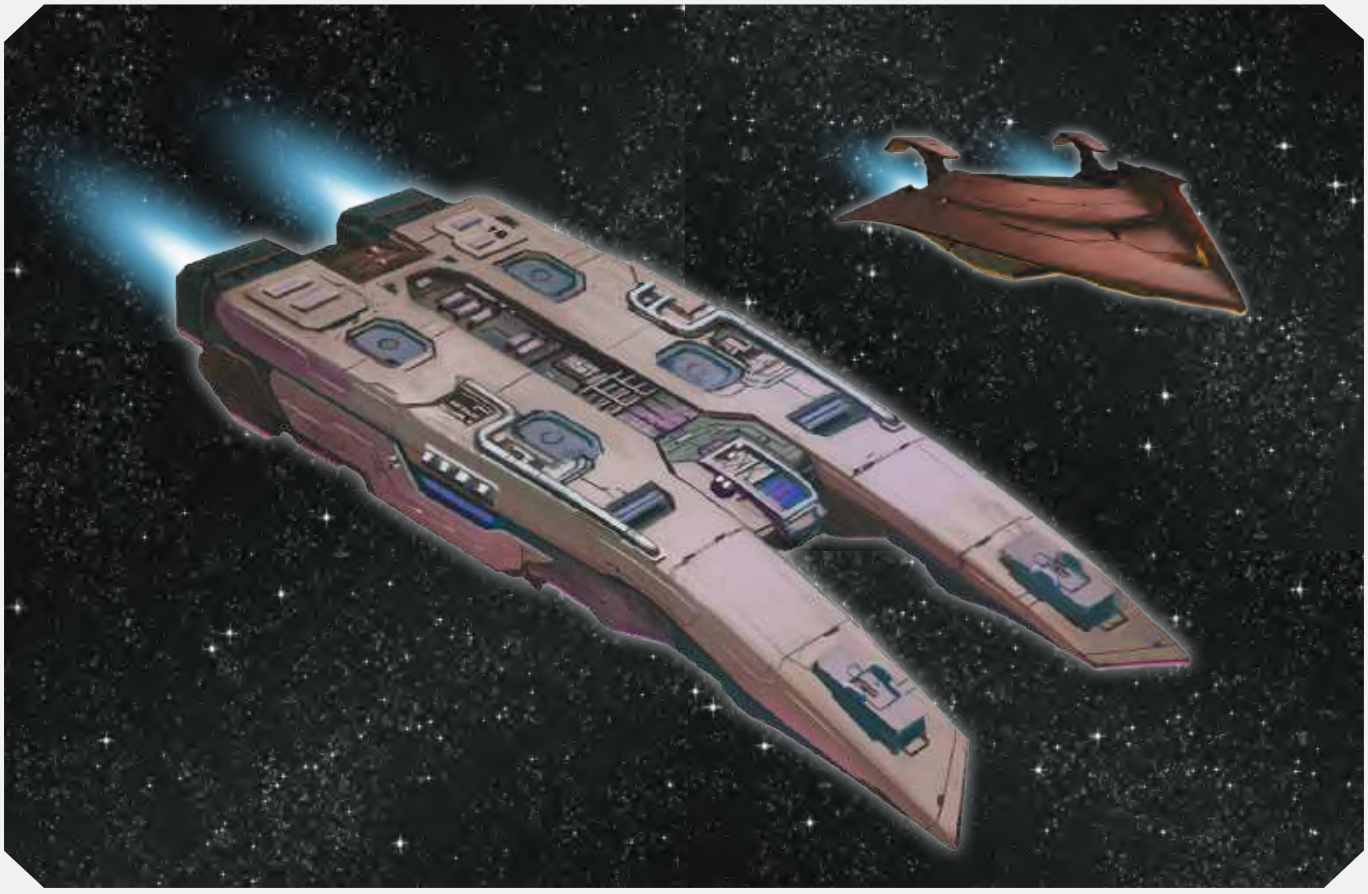
factories of Sardis are sold across the sector and even into Crucis Margin to rimward. The mainworld has a second artificial moonlet named Braihe. Braihe is another deliberately captured body and the site of Braihe Highport, the main interstellar port for the entire Corporate. With many landing areas for large and small ships, Braihe serves most of the traffic through the system, with sublight craft plying a regular service to Megusard Downport on Sardis. The moonlet is a major site for shipbuilding, with several yards building private and corporate vessels. At present all the yards are busy with many orders from Renkard. Security has been increased to avoid the possibility of interference in the completion of contracts.

THE GATEWAY LEGION

Riftin is the most forward point where the Gateway Legion of the Loyal Sector Guard has a significant presence. According to reports back home, contingents are present on several worlds but in reality some are fully equipped and combat-ready divisions. Even those who know the scale of the LSG presence may not be aware of its combat capabilities.

Gateway Legion forces are mostly equipped for defensive warfare against the Lords of Thunder. They have large quantities of anti-armour and aerospace defence weapons including planetary defence systems. Armoured vehicles are light but far more advanced than anything the local forces can field. An Imperial official might be concerned the LSG could take on a planetary army and win; local commanders know they would stand little chance against such a force.

There is no indication the Gateway Legion intends to do any more than defend the region from K'Kree incursions. However, ambassadors from the Lords of Thunder decry the Gateway Legion as inflammatory and claim LSG-backed vessels routinely enter its space on 'missions of aggression and rapacity'. It is widely suspected the Gateway Legion's leaders want a war with the K'Kree here, far from the Imperial border, and hope it will draw in a full-scale Imperial response. There are those who wonder what purpose this combat-ready force will be turned to if that war does not soon materialise.



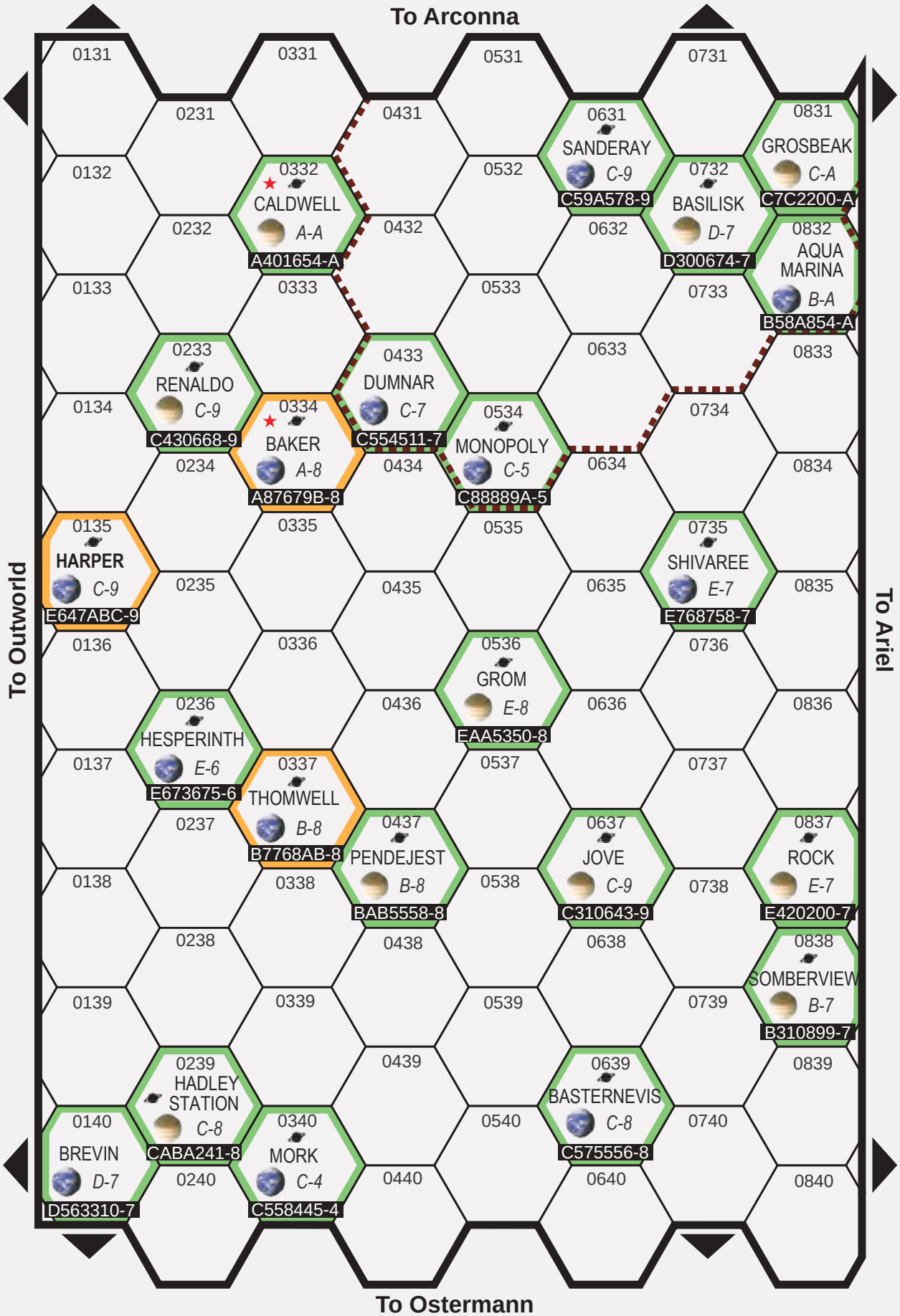
OWNSBEE SUBSECTOR

Ownsbee is mostly independent, with a few worlds belonging to the Galian Federation in the trailing-coreward corner. Most trade from the Imperium moves through the ports of this subsector, making both the Imperium and the Federation influential in local affairs. Imperial navy ships belonging to the Ley Sector Fleet are not uncommon in the subsector; Galian vessels less so but still encountered from time-to-time.

Many trade ships turn around at the independent world of Caldwell, selling on their cargoes to local traders or merchants from the Federation and taking on new goods brought there from Federation worlds. Other vessels proceed on to Tharver or even Gateway itself and there is an increasing presence of Imperial businesses throughout the subsector. The majority of money spent by the Gateway Project is devoted to these worlds, either directly or to influence decision-making in favour of Imperial interests.

The world Amber has a repressive, unstable government opposed by a vigorous pro-Imperial insurgency. Although the Galian Federation does not approve of the world government and has generated considerable bad press by supporting it, the Federation has chosen to assist against the rebels. It is widely assumed these are aided by Imperial-funded mercenaries and that a secret agreement will recognise a revolutionary government if one emerges. This might damage Imperial-Galian relations but both powers appear to think the risk is worth it.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Aqua Marina	0832	—	B58A854-A	Ri Wa	—	Galian	—
Baker	0334	N	A87679B-8	Ag	A	—	G
Basilisk	0732	—	D300674-7	Na Ni Va	—	Galian	G
Basternevis	0639	—	C575556-8	Ag Ni	—	—	G
Brevin	0140	—	D563310-7	Lo	—	—	—
Caldwell	0332	N	A401654-A	Ic Na Ni Va	—	—	G
Dumnar	0433	—	C554511-7	Ag Ni	—	Galian	—
Grom	0536	—	EAA5350-8	Fl Lo	—	—	G
Grosbeak	0831	—	C7C2200-A	Fl Lo	—	Galian	—
Hadley Station	0239	—	CABA241-8	Fl Lo	—	—	G
Harper	0135	—	E647ABC-9	Hi In	A	—	G
Hesperinth	0236	—	E673675-6	Ni	—	—	G
Jove	0637	—	C310643-9	Na Ni	—	—	G
Monopoly	0534	—	C88889A-5	Lt Ri	—	Galian	G
Mork	0340	—	C558445-4	Ni	—	—	G
Pendejest	0437	—	BAB5558-8	Fl Ni	—	—	G
Renaldo	0233	—	C430668-9	De Na Ni Po	—	—	G
Rock	0837	—	E420200-7	De Lo Po	—	—	G
Sanderay	0631	—	C59A578-9	Ni Wa	—	Galian	G
Shivaree	0735	—	E768758-7	Ag Ri	—	—	G
Somberview	0838	—	B310899-7	Na	—	—	G
Thomwell	0337	—	B7768AB-8	—	A	—	G


To Arconna
To Outworld
To Ariel
To Ostermann
0131
0331
0531
0731
0231
0431
0631
SANDERAY
C-9
C59A578-9
0831
GROSBEAK
C-A
C7C2200-A
0132
0332
CALDWELL
A-A
A401654-A
0532
0732
BASILISK
D-7
D300674-7
0232
0432
0632
0832
AQUA MARINA
B-A
B58A854-A
0133
0333
0533
0733
0233
RENALDO
C-9
C430668-9
0433
DUMNAR
C-7
C554511-7
0633
0833
0134
0334
BAKER
A-8
A87679B-8
0534
MONOPOLY
C-5
C88889A-5
0734
0234
0434
0634
0834
0135
HARPER
C-9
E647ABC-9
0335
0535
0735
SHIVAREE
E-7
E768758-7
0235
0435
0635
0835
0136
0336
0536
GROM
E-8
EAA5350-8
0736
0236
HESPERINTH
E-6
E673675-6
0436
0636
0836
0137
0337
THOMWELL
B-8
B7768AB-8
0537
0737
0237
0437
PENDEJEST
B-8
BAB5558-8
0637
JOVE
C-9
C310643-9
0837
ROCK
E-7
E420200-7
0138
0338
0538
0738
0238
0438
0638
0838
SOMBERVIEW
B-7
B310899-7
0139
0339
0539
0739
0239
HADLEY STATION
C-8
CABA241-8
0439
0639
BASTERNEVIS
C-8
C575556-8
0839
0140
BREVIN
D-7
D563310-7
0340
MORK
C-4
C558445-4
0540
0740
0240
0440
0640
0840
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Other Naval Base
Secure System
Amber Zone
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)
Galian Federation Border

BAKER

Baker was once part of the Galian Trade League and vigorously resisted attempts to retain it as part of the Galian Federation. This involved violence until the Federation concluded Baker was not worth the effort. The world began a gradual decline at that point, proudly isolated from the Federation and at times openly hostile to it. This might have gone on for longer had Imperial diplomats and traders not persuaded the world government to change its stance. In reality, the government of Baker knew its position was untenable in the long run and was entirely willing to accept Imperial investment in return for a reconciliation with the Federation.

Today, Baker provides an alternate route into the Galian Federation for Imperial ships wishing to avoid Caldwell. Over-reliance on one local government is generally considered a bad thing and the creation of a Class A starport at Baker actually improved the Imperials' bargaining position when requesting passage rights. Baker's decline has been turned around completely and the world seems to be enjoying something of an economic golden age. Some money has been put into improved system defences which, along with good relations with the Imperium, is exactly what the Gateway Project was set up to achieve.

BAKER

UWP	A87679B–8	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	8	12,800km
Atmosphere	7	Standard; Tainted
Hydrosphere	6	60%
Population	7	Tens of millions
Government Type	9	Impersonal Bureaucracy
Law Level	B	Rigid control of civilian movement
Technology Level	8	Quality Computers

BASTERNEVIS

UWP	C575556–8	
Starport	C	Routine
Size	5	8,000km
Atmosphere	7	Standard; Tainted
Hydrosphere	5	50%
Population	5	Hundreds of thousands
Government Type	5	Feudal Technocracy
Law Level	6	All firearms except shotguns prohibited
Technology Level	8	Quality Computers

BASTERNEVIS

Lying at the coreward end of Ownsbee and off the main trade routes, Basternevis is a small world with a standard atmosphere. It would have made a good prospect for colonisation in the Rule of Man era and it is entirely possible that Solomani colonists might have landed there. If they did, they would have found an apparently indigenous non-human species who were at around TL5. These people were for a long time referred to as the Remnant but more recent scholarship has led to better understanding of their society and they are today more commonly known as the Capry. Basternevis was overcome by catastrophe at some point during the Long Night, and was unpopulated when human colonists arrived sometime in the early 300s.

A modest TL8 society exists today on Basternevis, with most of the 500,000 inhabitants living in a cluster of towns in the centre of the largest continent. Sheltered by a tall mountain range to the west, this area has cleaner air than most of the planet. On the other hand, a more concentrated version of the atmospheric taint is precipitated out at the mountains, creating a dead zone at their foot which is visible from space. The taint is complex and mildly toxic to most living things. Much of the planet's flora is developing a resistance but tends to be fragile and sickly. Even the cleanest areas are vulnerable to minor climatic variations.

It is quite obvious that this situation cannot have been going on long but there are much more interesting planets to investigate and little scientific interest in such a backwater. There are rumours that traces of a lost civilisation have been found – some say human and some say alien – and that the atmospheric taint may be the result of runaway industrial pollution. The wilder tales speak of a ruined city where adventurers battle one another to retrieve valuable relics.

SOMBERVIEW

Somberview is in many ways typical of the independent worlds of Gateway. A more or less barren world with only a trace of atmospheric gas, it was settled hundreds of years ago then largely forgotten about. With a population of around 600 millions and a mid-tech industrial base the world is a potential market for high-tech goods. The main obstacle for this is lack of funds to buy them. In recent years, various members of the Gateway Project have been active on worlds like Somberview, investing in local industry and assisting in advancing technological capabilities. This is not altruism but commercial pragmatism; creating a modest export capability makes the world a viable market – and not coincidentally the improvements in quality of life should win friends.

SOMBERVIEW

UWP	B310899–7	
Starport	B	Good
Size	3	4,800km
Atmosphere	1	Trace
Hydrosphere	0	Desert World
Population	8	Hundreds of millions
Government Type	9	Impersonal Bureaucracy
Law Level	9	Possession of weapons outside the home prohibited
Technology Level	7	Miniaturised Electronics

Not all such efforts have been success stories but Somberview is considered a showcase by many. Although the world's official Tech Level is still 7 it has a modest TL9 industrial base operated by skilled locals trained on-site or educated at Imperial universities. Resources are locally garnered and products are divided between supporting further advancement and trade for higher-tech goods. This has created something of a dependency; until Somberview has a sufficient industrial base it will be reliant on its offworld investors and might suffer a collapse or at least a slump if they pull out. This is part of the plan; good business is beneficial for everyone involved but those who have the resources call the shots.

TERRAFORMING SOMBERVIEW

Several attempts have been made to terraform Somberview in the hope of making it less inhospitable. Most have been badly funded HAT (half-assed terraforming) projects that achieved virtually nothing. The latest has more promise but is using an unproven technique. Icy planetoids from the system's Oort cloud are directed inwards and much later caught by craft which place them in 'ready' orbits, from which they are guided close to the mainworld. Finally the rocks are soft-landed in sheltered areas to create small deposits of ice. Any gases released in the process are a bonus, as thickening the atmosphere is an extremely long-term project.

Sites for ice deposits are carefully chosen to provide a combination of shelter from direct sunlight and geothermal warming, creating a crust of ice over slushy depths. Here, simple life has been introduced. According to rumour this is single-celled creatures from Splinter but there are other possible candidates. The long-term aim is to create areas of life-bearing liquid water on Somberview. Results so far have hardly been promising but the project's funding continues to increase. This may be for pragmatic reasons – the Imperial authorities have found a place to try a new terraforming technique without chancing harm to Imperial citizens.

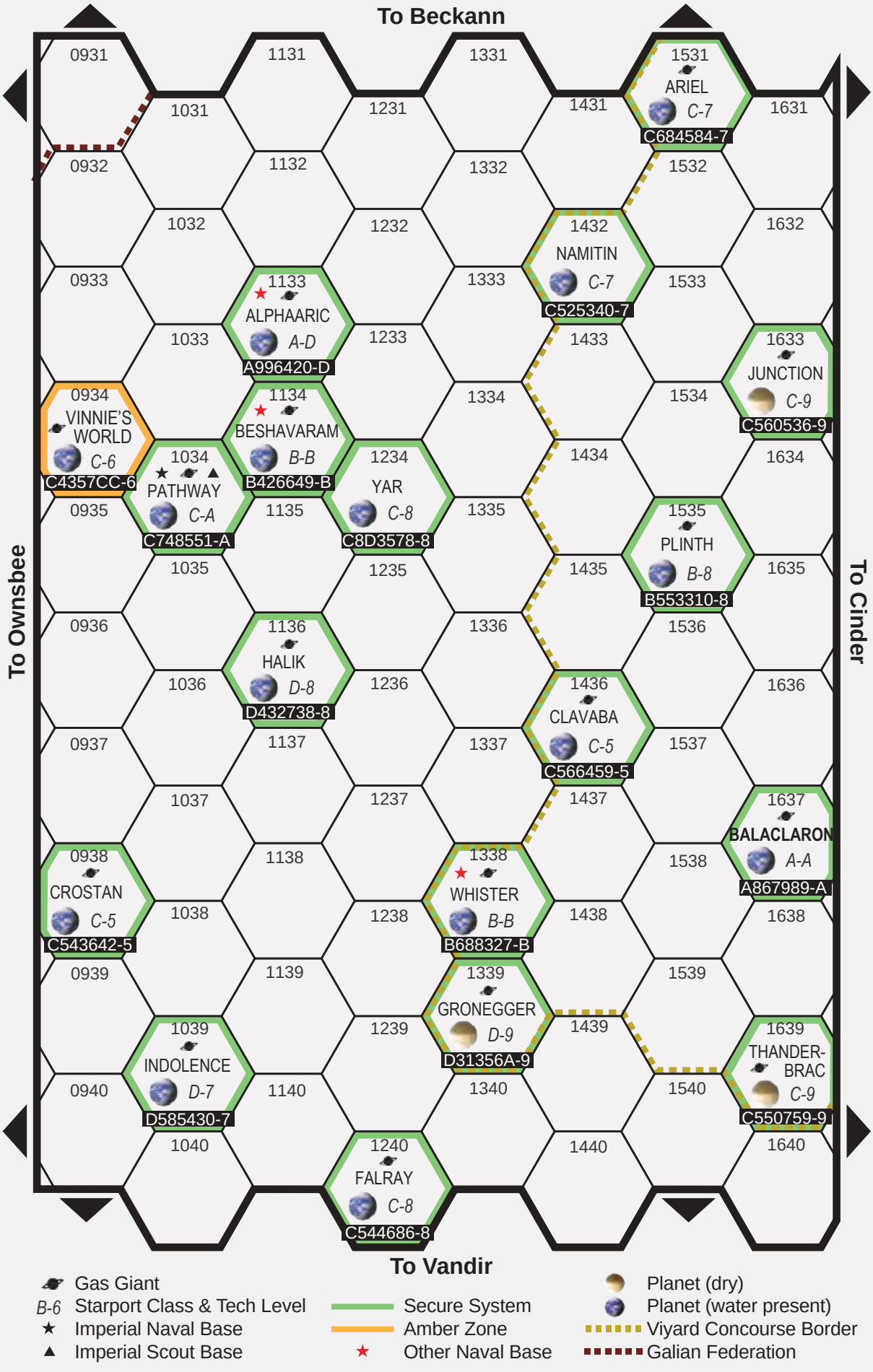
ARIEL SUBSECTOR

About half of Ariel is the territory of the Viyard Concourse, with the remainder being independent, in theory. The breakup of the Galian Trade League had varying effects on the people of Ariel. Some worlds barely noticed, others were fought over or lost vital offworld goods and suffered a plunge in sustainable technology. Although several worlds are now mid-tech societies their people are well aware of what can be done with the right equipment and knowledge, and in most cases have learned to replicate important functions using lower-tech equipment, more personnel and greater effort.

The highest technology in the subsector is possessed by the Faar, a race native to Alphaaric. They seem to have no interest in the wider cosmos however and have not come to dominate the region – either politically or economically – as they might have done. The Galian Federation, Trindel Confederacy and Viyard Concourse all court the Faar as allies and trading partners, but none have achieved much of an advantage.

The low-population world of Pathway is officially designated an Imperial client state. Essentially this means the Imperial authorities have negotiated a deal to set up a small scout/naval base there. The base supports forward deployments and contact with the Faar, and is assumed to be a marshalling point for information gathered by a web of agents in the surrounding subsectors. The world's modest port sees considerable jump-2 traffic moving between the Galian Federation and the Viyard Concourse, and thence to more distant ports.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Alphaaric	1133	N	A996420-D	Ni	—	—	G
Ariel	1531	—	C684584-7	Ag Ni	—	Viyard	G
Balaclaron	1637	—	A867989-A	Hi Ga	—	Viyard	G
Beshavaram	1134	N	B426649-B	Ni	—	—	G
Clavaba	1436	—	C566459-5	Lt Ni	—	Viyard	—
Crostan	0938	—	C543642-5	Lt Ni Po	—	—	G
Falray	1240	—	C544686-8	Ag Ni	—	—	G
Gronegger	1339	—	D31356A-9	Ic Ni	—	Viyard	G
Halik	1136	—	D432738-8	Na Po	—	—	G
Indolence	1039	—	D585430-7	Ni	—	—	G
Junction	1633	—	C560536-9	De Ni	—	Viyard	G
Namitin	1432	—	C525340-7	Lo	—	Viyard	—
Pathway	1034	NS	C748551-A	Ag Ni	—	Imperium	G
Plinth	1535	—	B553310-8	Lo Po	—	Viyard	G
Thanderbrac	1639	—	C550759-9	De Po	—	Viyard	—
Vinie's World	0934	—	C4357CC-6	—	A	—	G
Whister	1338	N	B688327-B	Lo	—	Viyard	G
Yar	1234	—	C8D3578-8	Ni	—	Galian	G


To Beckann
To Ownsbee
To Cinder
To Vandir
0931
1131
1331
1531
ARIEL
C-7
C684584-7
1631
1031
1231
1431
0932
1132
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1532
1032
1232
1432
NAMITIN
C-7
C525340-7
1632
0933
1133
ALPHAARIC
A-D
A996420-D
1333
1533
1033
1233
1433
1633
JUNCTION
C-9
C560536-9
0934
VINNIE'S WORLD
C-6
C4357CC-6
1134
BESHAVARAM
B-B
B426649-B
1334
1534
1034
PATHWAY
C-A
C748551-A
1234
YAR
C-8
C8D3578-8
1434
1634
0935
1135
1335
1535
PLINTH
B-8
B553310-8
1035
1235
1435
1635
0936
1136
HALIK
D-8
D432738-8
1336
1536
1036
1236
1436
CLAVABA
C-5
C566459-5
1636
0937
1137
1337
1537
1037
1237
1437
1637
BALACLARON
A-A
A867989-A
0938
CROSTAN
C-5
C543642-5
1138
1338
WHISTER
B-B
B688327-B
1538
1038
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1339
GRONEGGER
D-9
D31356A-9
1539
1039
INDOLENCE
D-7
D585430-7
1239
1439
1639
THANDER-BRAC
C-9
C550759-9
0940
1140
1340
1540
1040
1240
FALRAY
C-8
C544686-8
1440
1640
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Imperial Naval Base
Imperial Scout Base
Secure System
Amber Zone
Other Naval Base
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)
Viyard Concourse Border
Galian Federation

ALPHAARIC

UWP	A996420–D	
Starport	A	Excellent
Size	9	14,400km
Atmosphere	9	Dense; Tainted
Hydrosphere	6	60%
Population	4	Tens of thousands
Government Type	2	Participating Democracy
Law Level	0	No prohibitions
Technology Level	D	Above Average Imperial

ALPHAARIC

Alphaaric is the homeworld of the Faar, a non-human species possessing high technology but apparently little inclination to leave their world. The system data partially reflects the human presence in the system. For example, the Class A port designated by the data is Faarview, a port/city orbiting Mashan, the system's largest gas giant, and not the Faar's homeworld port. Faarview has a population of some 20,000 humans and this population is listed in the data.

Population figures, like much else about the Faar, are unknown. What is certain is that the Faar possess TL13 devices and can apparently construct them. They have studied jump drives provided by humans and not only profess to understand them but have offered theoretical advice on improving the design – yet the Faar have no desire to build or even board a spacecraft. The Faar do trade with humans, mainly from the neighbouring Galian Federation. They welcome spacefarers to their many small Class D equivalent spaceports and trade happily for electronics, recreational devices and artworks. They will not sell weapons or starship components and have no interest in buying them.

The age of the Faar civilisation is not known but it seems likely this is their homeworld, and that they have had some form of civilisation for at least 20,000 years. Society seems to be well balanced and the population are apparently content, although exactly how the Faar govern, police and administer remains unclear. Archaeologists have occasionally found ruins built by the Faar on worlds very distant from Alphaaric. The connection has never been proven and the Faar decline to comment.

INDOLENCE

UWP	D585430–7	
Starport	D	Poor
Size	5	8,000km
Atmosphere	8	Dense
Hydrosphere	5	50%
Population	4	Tens of thousands
Government Type	3	Self-Perpetuating Oligarchy
Law Level	0	No prohibitions
Technology Level	7	Quality Computers

INDOLENCE

Home to 90,000 people governed by a hereditary governor-for-life, Indolence is an independent world close to the rimward end of Ariel and on the verge of the Crucis Margin sector. A backwater world, Indolence is only useful as a jump-2 link across that end of the subsector or into Crucis Margin. It is rumoured that ships in the area sometimes experience problems with their jump drive ranging from longer duration in jump space to a complete inability to enter jump for several hours or days at a time. Some ships have gone missing, leading to wild tales about something called deadspace. Its existence has never been proven and most of what is known about the phenomenon comes from the background of a particularly lurid interstellar drama popular a century ago.

Those that make the journey to Indolence find a chilly, overcast world with a thick, soupy atmosphere and a dull, dark green landscape covered in thick shrubby forests. The sole human habitation is on a large island near the equator where the climate is more pleasant. The population are scattered across this island in communities of a few hundred. The vegetation of Indolence is anything but indolent and breaks up roads almost as quickly as they can be constructed. Thus most transport is by air, with dirigibles being the commonest load-carrying transport. Every community has a dirigible field and the starport at the capital is merely a larger than usual airship yard where starships sometimes land. The locals are not particularly interested in offworlders

or their goods. They will trade courteously enough but if no ship ever came into Indolence again, nobody would care. Few would even notice.

There are rumours of ruins in the wilds of Indolence, as with several worlds in the region. In this case, the rumours are true. Some niche scientists and explorers have postulated that a spacefaring civilisation colonised Indolence around 4-5,000 years ago, stayed for a couple of millennia then upped and off leaving virtually nothing behind. The human population arrived before these others left and have ancient tales of friendly but strangely fearful aliens who once shared their world. This information is surprisingly hard to come by and cannot be found in most common datanets.

THE FAAR IN GATEWAY

According to some scientists, ruins found in other parts of Gateway are definitely of Faar origin, although it is difficult to prove this since the Faar do not grant access to their modern communities. All supposedly confirmed Faar sites show signs of violence, hurried abandonment, or both. There are no known communities of Faar anywhere but their homeworld. The humans who live with the Faar generally do not discuss the matter and will shut down any discussion in an uncharacteristically blunt manner.

Occasionally, humans do leave Faar society. This is rare and those that do are generally unsavoury individuals or the victims of some tragedy that leaves them seeking new homes and meanings. These people can sometimes be induced to talk about the Faar reluctance to travel and their responses are split roughly 50/50 between two apparently contradictory tales. According to some the Faar voyaged over vast distances, far beyond the sector, aboard their own ships and some they found drifting and managed to repair. They went everywhere, saw everything and realised that exploring far-off space was a dead end. Now the Faar explore the universe through music, poetry and art, and best of all through the companionship of good friends. It is here, they maintain, that real truths are found. The rest is just rocks, gravity wells and radio waves.

There is another version of this tale. In this, the Faar voyaged to a distant star where they found wondrous starships and took possession of them. They wandered, explored and found something that terrified them so much they ran home, hid, destroyed their starships and huddled around tables with their friends. They may hope whatever it was might not find them but if it does, nothing but annihilation awaits. Better to enjoy the company of friends in the meantime than waste time on exploration and science that will only to attract attention.

It is possible none of this is true. If any of it is, the Faar may have encountered something that could wipe out Charted Space. It is said they will not talk about it partly out of fear that 'it might hear' but also to protect everyone else. If they knew, they might go looking – and the Faar do not want that to happen. In the end, it might be better not to know what the Faar learned, and they are certainly not inclined to inflict such terrible knowledge on anyone else.

CINDER SUBSECTOR

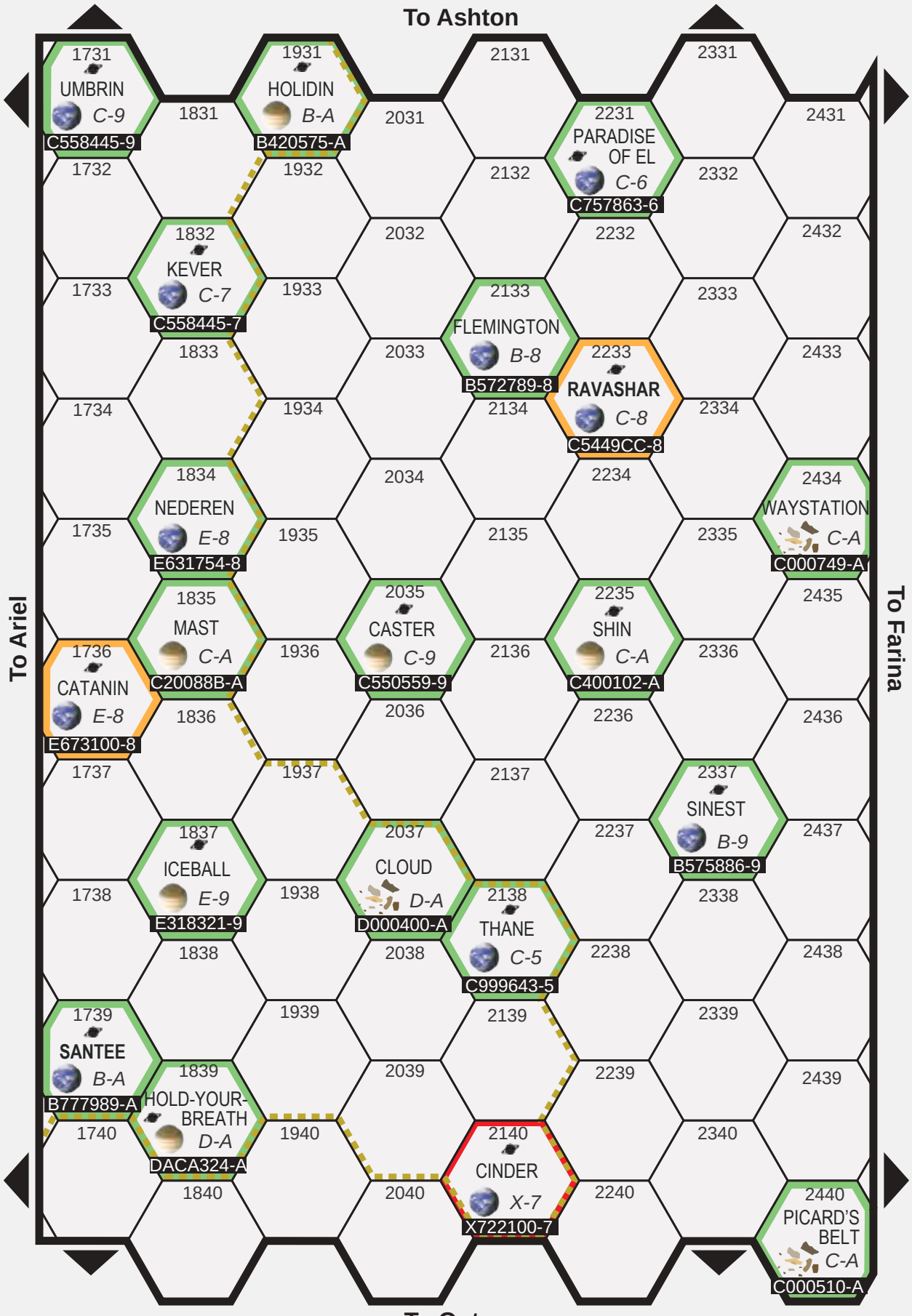
Cinder contains 20 star systems, 12 of which lie within the Viyard Concourse. Around 12 billion people live in the subsector. Whilst the vast majority of these sophonts are humans, local minor species are represented in small enclaves on some worlds. The Galian Trade League never incorporated the worlds of Cinder that currently lie outside the Viyard Concourse, so there is no history – good or bad – of membership.

Cinder provides several good markets for goods from the Viyard Concourse and Megusard Corporate; worlds with sufficient technology to produce valuable goods in return and/or a high enough population to create a demand for bulk items. Competition between Megusard and Viyard traders is high but generally amicable since both states benefit greatly from trade with one another.

The FJT (five-jump-two) route from Mast to Megucorp Beta is used for most direct trade but the majority of goods are shipped to the neutral port at Waystation.

The Waystation system has a significant Gateway Shipping presence, based out of a small independent port in the same asteroid belt as the system capital. Waystation is the trailingmost of Gateway Shipping's facilities and was never particularly large. It serves as a turnaround point for Gateway's own vessels and a recreation facility for their crews. Training services and some minor maintenance are also offered, used mainly by vessels out of Waystation itself. Given the situation a subsector to trailing it is no surprise that Gateway Shipping is drawing down its presence in the region and there are rumours the training facility has been leased to a small company delivering a crash-course in shipboard operations to the raw personnel recruited by the Renkard Union.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Caster	2035	—	C550559-9	De Ni Po	—	—	G
Catanin	1736	—	E673100-8	Lo Da	A	Viyard	G
Cinder	2140	—	X722100-7	Lo Po	R	Viyard	G
Cloud	2037	—	D000400-A	As Ni Va	—	Viyard	—
Flemington	2133	—	B572789-8	—	—	—	—
Hold-Your-Breath	1839	—	DACA324-A	Fl Lo	—	Viyard	G
Holidin	1931	—	B420575-A	De Ni Po	—	Viyard	G
Iceball	1837	—	E318321-9	Ic Lo	—	Viyard	G
Kever	1832	—	C558445-7	Ni	—	Viyard	G
Mast	1835	—	C20088B-A	Na Va	—	Viyard	—
Nederen	1834	—	E631754-8	Na Po	—	Viyard	—
Paradise of El	2231	—	C757863-6	Ga	—	—	G
Picard's Belt	2440	—	C000510-A	As Ni Va	—	—	—
Ravashar	2233	—	C5449CC-8	Hi In	A	—	G
Santee	1739	—	B777989-A	Hi In	—	Viyard	G
Shin	2235	—	C400102-A	Lo Va	—	—	G
Sinest	2337	—	B575886-9	—	—	—	G
Thane	2138	—	C999643-5	Lt Ni	—	Viyard	G
Umbrin	1731	—	C558445-9	Ni	—	Viyard	G
Waystation	2434	—	C000749-A	As Na Va	—	—	—


To Ashton
To Ariel
To Farina
To Outrun
1731
UMBRIN
C-9
C558445-9
1931
HOLIDIN
B-A
B420575-A
2131
2331
2231
PARADISE
OF EL
C-6
C757863-6
2431
1832
KEVER
C-7
C558445-7
2133
FLEMINGTON
B-8
B572789-8
2233
RAVASHAR
C-8
C5449CC-8
1834
NEDEREN
E-8
E631754-8
2434
WAYSTATION
C-A
C000749-A
1835
MAST
C-A
C20088B-A
2035
CASTER
C-9
C550559-9
2235
SHIN
C-A
C400102-A
2435
1736
CATANIN
E-8
E673100-8
2337
SINEST
B-9
B575886-9
1837
ICEBALL
E-9
E318321-9
2037
CLOUD
D-A
D000400-A
2138
THANE
C-5
C999643-5
2437
1739
SANTEE
B-A
B777989-A
1839
HOLD-YOUR-
BREATH
D-A
DACA324-A
2140
CINDER
X-7
X722100-7
2440
PICARD'S
BELT
C-A
C000510-A
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Viyard Concourse Border
Secure System
Amber Zone
Red Zone
Asteroids (no atmosphere/water)
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)

PARADISE OF EL

Isolated in the Silveron Deep, inaccessible by even jump-2 ships except by a lengthy transit along the astrographic feature known as the Gateway Sword, Paradise of El is a pleasant, temperate world, although with a rather thin atmosphere. El was settled by a group of isolation-seeking colonists as twilight gathered and the Long Night drew in. Rightly guessing hard times were ahead, the colonists set out to become as self-sufficient as possible. Their technology base was low but extremely rugged and as a result El came through the Long Night remarkably well. Contact with the rest of Gateway did not come until 226, when a long-range scouting mission out of the Galian Trade League crossed the Deep via Caster and Shin, and recontacted the many isolated worlds of the Morrell Scatter.

Contact remained intermittent until the 900s, when the Viyard Concourse underwent a period of expansion and attempted to annex various systems in the Scatter. The operation was not a success but in the case of El, a small military base was set up at the Starport and Viyard officials began to issue dictates to the government of El. The inhabitants of El, accustomed to being left to their own business, reacted with a vigorous but inept guerrilla campaign. The locals could not seriously threaten the Viyard forces at the port but Viyard was now finding its trailing possessions to be an embarrassment rather than an asset. An unspoken compromise was eventually reached; a Viyard-backed government would rule the planet from its starport fortress and the population would ignore it. This has been the case for the past 50 years or so, with no sign of change.

PARADISE OF EL

UWP	C757863–6	
Starport	C	Routine
Size	7	11,200km
Atmosphere	5	Thin
Hydrosphere	7	70%
Population	8	Hundreds of millions
Government Type	6	Captive Government/ Colony
Law Level	3	Machine guns, automatic rifles prohibited
Technology Level	6	Nuclear Power

PICARD'S BELT

Situated at the rimward end of the Morrell Scatter, Picard's Belt is a highly unusual asteroid field. The belt is truly vast, so much so that the star appears hazy. It has never been properly mapped and new discoveries are constantly being made. Apart from the awesome belt, the system is more or less empty. Even its Oort cloud is unusually thin, as if all matter in the system has been concentrated into the belt. How or why this could occur is beyond understanding. A number of Belter communities, perhaps totalling 900,000 souls, are scattered around the fringe of the belt. Ore is exported mainly to the Viyard Concourse. There is no central port; several communities have processing works and these all have their own Class C ports. Thus the Belt can seem to change at every visit.

Not everyone comes to Picard for ore. A number of scientific and treasure-seeking operations are taking place within the belt. Strange artifacts have been found on the asteroids of the belt, including pyramidal buildings, a 20 centimetre sphere of an unknown alloy and a 50 kilometre asteroid cored by some immense force, leaving behind a mirror-like inner surface. The origin of these artifacts is unknown but likely alien. It has been suggested that an unknown civilisation exists deep in the belt but no traces have ever been found.

PICARD'S BELT

UWP	C000510–A	
Starport	C	Routine
Size	0	Asteroid Belt
Atmosphere	0	No atmosphere
Hydrosphere	0	Desert World
Population	5	Hundreds of thousands
Government Type	1	Company/Corporation
Law Level	0	No prohibitions
Technology Level	A	Interstellar community

THE MORELL SCATTER

The Morell Scatter is a semi-official term given to the sparse star systems of Cinder and Farina subsectors. The most prominent astrographical feature of the region is the Gateway Sword, a straight line of systems from Waystation to Rios which permits jump-2 access to most other worlds in these two subsectors. Ships from the Megusard Corporate, the Renkard Union and the Viyard Concourse have traditionally carried most of the trade moving around the Scatter, although in recent years Renkard vessels have been occupied elsewhere.

The Scatter is in many ways typical of Gateway. A two parsec range is required to navigate it, although many ships use two one-parsec jumps to cross between worlds. Information and goods generally move slowly through the region along predicable routes. Occasionally vessels are positioned to intercept those of a rival, denying them an accurate picture of what is happening whilst an action is taken on one of the other worlds in the region.

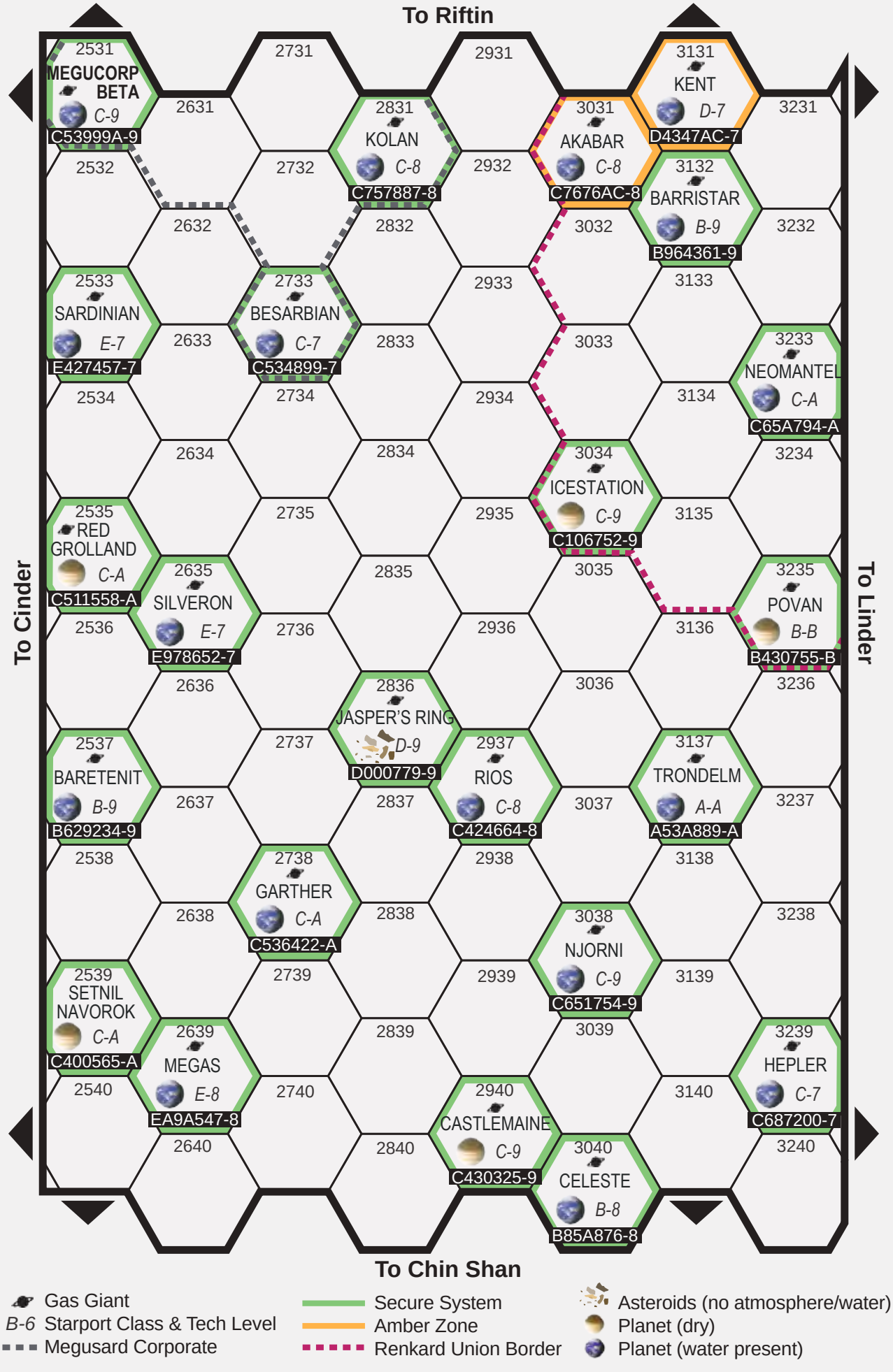
With Renkard and, to a lesser extent, Megusard distracted by events to trailing, Viyard vessels have been increasingly common in the Scatter. It is likely some worlds are moving towards a more pro-Viyard stance either out of generated goodwill or as a result of economic pressure. Whether this will lead to formal expansion or simply greater presence remains to be seen.

FARINA SUBSECTOR

Farina contains 23 star systems, most of which are at least in theory independent. The strongest economic and political influences come from the Megusard Corporate and the Renkard Union, with the more distant Viyard Concourse generally occupied elsewhere. Viyard-registered trade ships are not uncommon in the subsector but it has never been an area of great political interest to the Concourse. That is changing as the Lords of Thunder make their presence known but not quickly.

There are no heavily industrialised worlds in Farina, making it a market for goods from the Renkard Union and the Megusard Corporate. The population of the subsector is almost universally human, with small enclaves of other species. As yet there are no known populations of K'Kree in Farina, although the steady encroachment of the Lords of Thunder might result in some worlds being taken over in the coming years. Conquest by the Lords of Thunder is a real fear for the humans but as yet there is no unified resistance to their advance. There are rumours of K'Kree advisors present on worlds where there is dissent or active insurrection and a surprising abundance of weaponry available to anyone with a cause, other than those who want to fight the K'Kree.

Name	Location	Bases	Statistics	Trade Codes	Travel Zone	Allegiance	Gas Giants
Akabar	3031	—	C7676AC-8	Ag Ni Ga Ri Da	A	Renkard	G
Baretenit	2537	—	B629234-9	Lo	—	—	G
Barristar	3132	—	B964361-9	Lo	—	Renkard	G
Besarbian	2733	—	C534899-7	—	—	Megusard	G
Castlemaine	2940	—	C430325-9	De Lo Po	—	—	G
Celeste	3040	—	B85A876-8	Wa	—	—	G
Garther	2738	—	C536422-A	Ni	—	—	G
Hepler	3239	—	C687200-7	Lo Ga	—	—	G
Icestation	3034	—	C106752-9	Ic Va	—	Renkard	G
Jasper's Ring	2836	—	D000779-9	As Na Va	—	—	G
Kent	3131	—	D4347AC-7	—	A	Renkard	G
Kolan	2831	—	C757887-8	Ga	—	Megusard	G
Megas	2639	—	EA9A547-8	Ni	—	—	G
Megucorp Beta	2531	—	C53999A-9	Hi	—	Megusard	—
Neomantel	3233	—	C65A794-A	Wa	—	Renkard	G
Njorni	3038	—	C651754-9	Po	—	—	G
Povan	3235	—	B430755-B	De Na Po	—	Renkard	G
Red Grolland	2535	—	C511558-A	Ic Ni	—	—	G
Rios	2937	—	C424664-8	Ni	—	—	G
Sardinian	2533	—	E427457-7	Ni	—	—	G
Setnil Navarok	2539	—	C400565-A	Ni Va	—	—	—
Silveron	2635	—	E978652-7	Ag Ni	—	—	G
Trondelm	3137	—	A53A889-A	Wa	—	—	G


To Riftin
2531
MEGUCORP BETA
C-9
C53999A-9
2731
2931
3131
KENT
D-7
D4347AC-7
3231
2631
2831
KOLAN
C-8
C757887-8
3031
AKABAR
C-8
C7676AC-8
2532
2732
2932
3132
BARRISTAR
B-9
B964361-9
3232
2632
2832
3032
2533
SARDINIAN
E-7
E427457-7
2733
BESARBIAN
C-7
C534899-7
2933
3133
2633
2833
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3233
NEOMANTEL
C-A
C65A794-A
2534
2734
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ICESTATION
C-9
C106752-9
3234
2535
RED GROLLAND
C-A
C511558-A
2735
2935
3135
2635
SILVERON
E-7
E978652-7
2835
3035
3235
POVAN
B-B
B430755-B
2536
2736
2936
3136
2636
2836
JASPER'S RING
D-9
D000779-9
3036
3236
2537
BARETENIT
B-9
B629234-9
2737
2937
RIOS
C-8
C424664-8
3137
TRONDELM
A-A
A53A889-A
2637
2837
3037
3237
2538
2738
GARTHER
C-A
C536422-A
2938
3138
2638
2838
3038
NJORNI
C-9
C651754-9
3238
2539
SETNIL NAVOROK
C-A
C400565-A
2739
2939
3139
2639
MEGAS
E-8
EA9A547-8
2839
3039
3239
HEPLER
C-7
C687200-7
2540
2740
2940
CASTLEMAINE
C-9
C430325-9
3140
2640
2840
3040
CELESTE
B-8
B85A876-8
3240
To Cinder
To Linder
To Chin Shan
Gas Giant
B-6 Starport Class & Tech Level
Megusard Corporate
Secure System
Amber Zone
Renkard Union Border
Asteroids (no atmosphere/water)
Planet (dry)
Planet (water present)

SILVERON		
UWP	E978652–7	
Starport	E	Frontier Installation
Size	9	14,400km
Atmosphere	7	Standard; Tainted
Hydrosphere	8	80%
Population	6	Millions
Government Type	5	Feudal Technocracy
Law Level	2	Portable energy weapons prohibited
Technology Level	7	Miniaturised Electronics

SILVERON

A large, wet world, Silveron is home to five million people who dwell in a large number of settlements across the temperate regions. Government is very loose, with power in the hands of a small, educated class who perform technological functions in return for support from the community. The forests of Silveron are home to much unique flora and fauna, and exports include a number of plant and animal derivatives used in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries. Exports are usually bulk shipments picked up once or twice a year by ships from the Renkard Union plying the Gateway Sword which extends from Waystation to Rios.

Silveron is renowned for the variety and ferocity of its carnivores, which pose a serious threat to the settlements. They are kept at bay by a social caste who proudly refer to themselves as Expendables. Expendables are usually young people hoping to earn the right to a full education and therefore the chance to become a leader or technical advisor. A period of service is required for all persons wishing to enter the higher-education process. This has the result that the leaders and scientists of Silveron all have a strong pragmatic streak. Of course, many Expendables serve for a time and go on to other careers or make Expendability their career, training and leading the next generation of guardians.

RIOS

Rios lies at the trailing end of the Gateway Sword, a broken chain of worlds running from Waystation and giving jump-2 access to Trondelm. The system is claimed by Trondelm but has never been developed into a significant asset. Possession serves mainly as a status symbol and to guarantee access to the Gateway Sword. The three million inhabitants are governed directly from Trondelm and for the most part work in industries that support the starport. There is a modest population in remote areas, mainly extracting resources or living in self-sufficient communities that rarely interact with the offworld government.

Rios is said to have indications of habitation in the past. According to some independent experts the ruins seemed to be of Faar origins, although Rios is very unlike Alphaaric. Hard information is difficult to come by, and Trondelm discourages visitors, but it seems at least some of these settlements suffered massive destruction similar to that caused by orbital bombardment. If the Faar did have distant colonies and they were wiped out, this might explain their reluctance to leave their homeworld. It does raise the question of who destroyed these settlements, and why?

RIOS		
UWP	C424664–8	
Starport	C	Routine
Size	4	6,400km
Atmosphere	2	Very thin; Tainted
Hydrosphere	4	40%
Population	6	Millions
Government Type	6	Captive Government / Colony
Law Level	4	Light assault weapons prohibited
Technology Level	8	Quality Computers

THE SLETEKK

The Sletekk is a vicious and sneaky carnivore thought to be native to Silveron. This is probably the case, although populations have been recorded on other worlds where they have caused havoc among people and the native wildlife alike. The Sletekk can best be described as a feathered leopard, favouring lightly wooded terrain but entirely willing to plunge into deep forests. Sletekk can climb alarmingly fast using their claws and will leap from a high place onto their prey as a favoured gambit. Their feather-like covering can be puffed up to keep warm or look intimidating and acts as excellent camouflage due to its light-absorbing matte colouration. This ability to regulate temperature also gives the Sletekk a measure of concealment even from thermal devices, although it is instinctive rather than a reaction to the presence of sensors.

Sletekk travel in small family groups, usually of three or four adults and two to six cubs of varying ages. They birth live young and are extremely protective of them, and are smart enough to know that armed humans are a real threat. Sletekk will stalk and kill humans just as they would a rival predator, even if they are not hungry. A family group usually has a range of about 30–40 kilometres depending on the availability of food.

The Camouflage trait refers to the DM applied to attempts to spot a Sletekk or to hit one with a weapon from more than 10 metres if there is any concealment available. It also applies to thermal sensors.

Animal	**Hits**	**Speed**
Sletekk	24	12m
Skills	Melee (natural) 2, Recon 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1	
Attacks	Claws (2D)	
Traits	Armour (+2), Camouflage (-2), Heightened Senses	
Behaviour	Carnivore, Hunter	

HIGH GUARD: TRAILING FRONTIER

The prevalence of independent powers in the Trailing Frontier has resulted in preferences for starship equipment not seen elsewhere. Some systems parallel those peculiar to other regions, whilst others are not generally found elsewhere. In theory, all systems could be built by any competent starship component manufacturer. However, the same problems may be solved in other ways or the need simply may not exist in other regions.

CONFIGURABLE FUEL/CARGO SPACE

The relative sparsity of star systems and absence of large mains in Gateway combined with the low availability of greater than jump-1 drives makes navigation something of a problem. This can be solved by carrying sufficient fuel for more than one jump but this detracts from the ability to carry cargo. One solution, also used elsewhere in Charted Space, is to make part of a ship's cargo capacity configurable as fuel tanks.

Any cargo area can be built or reconfigured as fuel/cargo space. This requires the addition of accessways, hatches and heavy-duty partitions. Once in place, swapping from fuel tankage to cargo space requires little more than flushing out the tanks to ensure no liquid hydrogen remains then loading them with cargo as needed. In theory, fuel tanks could be retrofitted to be used for cargo but this can be a problem if the tanks are oddly shaped or access is tricky. On most ships only a small part of the fuel tanks might be suitable for these retrofits.

Cargo/fuel containers cost Cr5000 per ton of capacity and require 0.05 tons of additional equipment, for example a fuel/cargo container capable of carrying 100 tons takes up 105 displacement tons and costs Cr500000. A given tank/hold must be used either for cargo or fuel. It is not possible to mix cargo and fuel unless specialised containers are used, which will greatly drive up the cost. For this reason, fuel/cargo areas are typically constructed as blocks sufficient to fulfil a particular purpose. A ship might have a dedicated cargo hold, enough fuel for normal operations and one jump, plus one or more configurable areas each containing enough fuel for an additional jump. At the price of some capacity, such a vessel becomes vastly more flexible yet retains the ability to navigate between the sparse star systems of Gateway.

MEGUSARD PROTOTYPE MESON GUN EMPLACEMENT

The meson gun becomes available at TL12, or rather that is the Tech Level at which a reliable and cost-effective version first becomes viable. The Megusard Corporate is capable of building a primitive version of this weapon at a single facility in the Sardis system. The installation is well protected, as it would be an obvious target in any conflict and is occasionally the subject of a sabotage attempt.

It is not clear how the Megusard Corporate obtained its meson weapons technology. One suggestion is a leak from an Imperial arms firm, perhaps accidentally-on-purpose as a means of hardening the trailing end of Gateway sector. Whilst Megusard cannot construct the more advanced versions of the weapon it has created a standardised lower-tech variant which is produced without full understanding of the processes involved.

Megusard Prototype Systems

System	TL	Range	Size	Power	Damage	Cost	Traits	Notes
HASWAT	11	Long	9,000 tons	1,000	2DD	MCr1000	AP (infinite), Radiation	TL11 prototype, +25% size, 500% cost.
Fusion Reactor	11	—	1.25	15	—	MCr5	—	TL11 prototype, +25% size, 500% cost. Power is output per 1.25 tons.

The Megusard meson weapon, known locally as Heavy Anti-Starship Weapon, Advanced Technology or HASWAT, is produced only in a version equivalent to an Imperial 7,500-ton weapon. Due to its lower Tech Level this weapon is 20% larger at 9,000 tons and costs MCr1000. It is delivered as part of a package which also includes a dedicated power plant and some protection. The power plant is an advanced prototype, equivalent in output to a TL12 fusion plant but with greater mass.

PLANETARY AEROSPACE DEFENCE (PAD) MISSILE

The generic term for any missile system designed to attack craft in orbit from the ground is PAD, or Planetary Aerospace Defence. PAD missiles are much larger than conventional ship-to-ship weapons, although their Final Attack Vehicle (FAV) component is often a standard missile. A PAD launcher can be considered a starship-scale component, although some governments mount them on maritime vessels, trains and huge ground vehicles.

Engagement of a target in low orbit will typically fall within the Short (11–1,250 kilometre) bracket, whilst more powerful missiles can engage targets in high orbit or local space. This is the Medium (1,521–10,000 kilometre) range band. Climbing out of a gravity well requires more thrust than a ship-to-ship engagement if the missile is to have any chance of interception. This thrust is provided by additional boosters and a high-burn initial drive stage. The table below indicates time required to reach a target in low orbit. An additional two space combat rounds are required to reach a target at Medium range, since the missile's drive has already done most of the work by the time it reaches low orbital height.

PAD MISSILES

Light PAD missiles have an additional booster stage which allows engagement at Short range (low orbital distance). However, these missiles have little fuel once reaching this altitude, so cannot engage a target beyond Short range unless it is drifting on a predictable vector. A standard PAD missile can engage at Medium range due to its additional boosters, a heavy PAD missile has very large additional boosters which reduce engagement times and, in theory, allow interception beyond orbital ranges. Heavy missiles also have larger warheads.

A PAD missile launcher can be quite basic, in the form of a silo or a mobile erector-launcher. It is considered a ship-scale component. Each launcher can hold a single missile. Normally launchers are single-shot weapons which are reloaded over several hours by lowering another missile into place with a crane. Launchers with a dedicated reloading system and stowage can have another missile in place in 2Dx10 minutes. Four Light PAD missiles, two standard missiles or one heavy missile take up one ton.'

PAD Missile Launcher

PAD Missile Time (Short Range)

World Size Code	Thrust 6	Thrust 10	Thrust 12	Thrust 15
0–2	Immediate (0)	Immediate (0)	Immediate (0)	Immediate (0)
3–4	1	Immediate (0)	Immediate (0)	Immediate (0)
5	2	1	Immediate (0)	Immediate (0)
6	3	2	1	Immediate (0)
7	5	3	2	Immediate (0)
8	8	5	3	1
9	12	8	5	2
10	15	12	8	3

PAD Missiles

Missile Type	Thrust	Damage	Cost	Traits
Light, TL7	6	4D	MCr0.3	Smart
Standard, TL7	10	5D	MCr0.5	Smart
Light, TL9	10	4D	MCr0.4	Smart
Standard, TL9	12	5D	MCr0.6	Smart
Heavy, TL9	15	6D	MCr0.9	Smart
Light, TL11	12	4D	MCr0.7	Smart
Standard, TL11	15	6D	MCr1	Smart
Heavy, TL11	15	8D	MCr1.5	Smart

PAD Missile Launchers

Type	Cost	Tons
Light, Static, TL 7	MCr1.5	1
Standard, Static, TL 7	MCr2	2
Heavy, Static, TL 7	MCr3	4
Light, Mobile, TL 8	MCr2.5	1.5
Standard, Mobile, TL 8	MCr3.5	3
Heavy, Mobile, TL 8	MCr6	6

POINT-DEFENCE WEAPONS

Larger ships can make use of a point-defence battery (see High Guard page 40) but for smaller or lower-tech vessels this is not an option. Defences are still desirable however and in some cases the authorities prefer civilians to arm ships only with short-range defensive weaponry rather than long-range missiles and combat lasers. Any hardpoint can mount a point-defence turret instead of a standard turret, and it is always possible to do so, even alongside combat weapons. This is inefficient, but some operators like to be able to switch their mounts from launching missiles to fend off an enemy's salvo or fighters.

POINT-DEFENCE TURRET (TL9)

A point-defence turret can only mount point-defence weapons and can mount only a single example. In some cases this may be a dual weapon but it makes a single attack with all features. That is, a dual point defence laser is considered a single weapon with two tubes. A weapon on a point-defence mount gains DM+2 to attack rolls but has a very limited maximum range. For most point-defence weapons this is Short, although a heavy point-defence laser can attack targets at Medium range. At this distance, the DM for a point-defence mount does not apply but normal damage is done. Point-defence turrets must be used by a Gunner.

Point Defense Turret

Point Defense Laser (TL9)

POINT-DEFENCE LASER (TL9)

A small, light weapon designed to intercept missiles and deter fighters, the point-defence laser has a maximum range of Short. A single point-defence laser can be mounted in a point-defence turret or replace

Point-Defence Weapons

Weapon	TL	Tons	Range	Power	Damage	Cost	Traits
Point-Defence Turret	9	0.5	—	1	—	MCr0.25	—
PD Laser	9	—	Short	1	1D3	MCr0.25	—
Dual PD Laser	10	—	Short	1	1D3	MCr0.5	—
Gatling PD Laser	12	—	Short	2	2D3	MCr0.75	—
Heavy PD Laser	11	—	Medium	2	3D3	MCr1	—

standard weapons in a normal turret. In the latter case either the point-defence weapons or standard weapons can fire in a given round as the targeting parameters are quite different.

DUAL POINT-DEFENCE LASER (TL10)

A more advanced version of the point-defence laser firing rapid pulses from alternating barrels a dual point-defence laser gains DM+1 to hit targets at Close or Adjacent range. This is added to any DMs for point-defence turret mounts.

GATLING POINT-DEFENCE LASER (TL12)

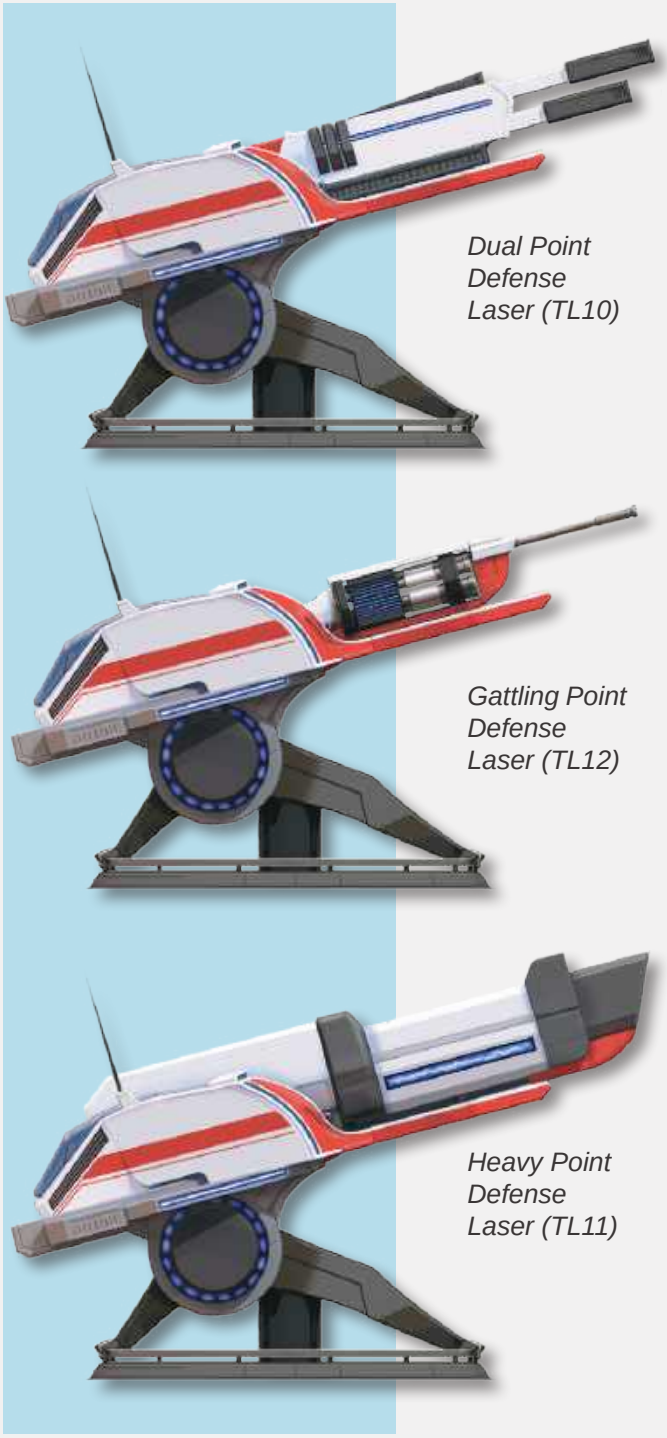
A multibarrel light laser with dedicated power storage and cooling systems, a gatling point-defence laser gains DM+2 to hit targets at Close or Adjacent range. This stacks with any bonus for being mounted in a point-defence turret.

HEAVY POINT-DEFENCE LASER (TL11)

Falling somewhere between a point-defence weapon and a conventional laser, the heavy point-defence laser is more powerful than others of its type but this comes at a price of a lower fire rate, which reduces the chance to hit. A heavy point-defence laser can attack at Medium range but does not gain any DM for being on a point-defence mount. Attacks at Short range do gain the DM.

PLANETOLOGY LAB (TL9)

A planetology lab is a specialist facility geared to mineral analysis and mathematical modelling of likely planetoid composition. Some equipment is fairly heavy-duty, intended for smashing and grinding up rock samples but there are also powerful specialised computers running sophisticated software. Using a planetology lab grants DM+1 on checks involving prospecting or analysis of samples which may be useful to miners, explorers or scientists. The DM can only be applied to a single task, requiring 2D hours of work by a suitably skilled Traveller. Every four tons of lab space allows one person to work, allowing



Dual Point Defense Laser (TL10)

Gattling Point Defense Laser (TL12)

Heavy Point Defense Laser (TL11)

DMs to be generated for multiple tasks. For example, prospectors on the surface of a planetoid can benefit from the work of their colleague in the lab or by moving in and out of their vessel to make an analysis then returning to work. A second Traveller working at a different task could generate a DM, which can be 'held' until the Traveller is able to get into the field and apply it. Planetology lab space costs MCr2 per ton.

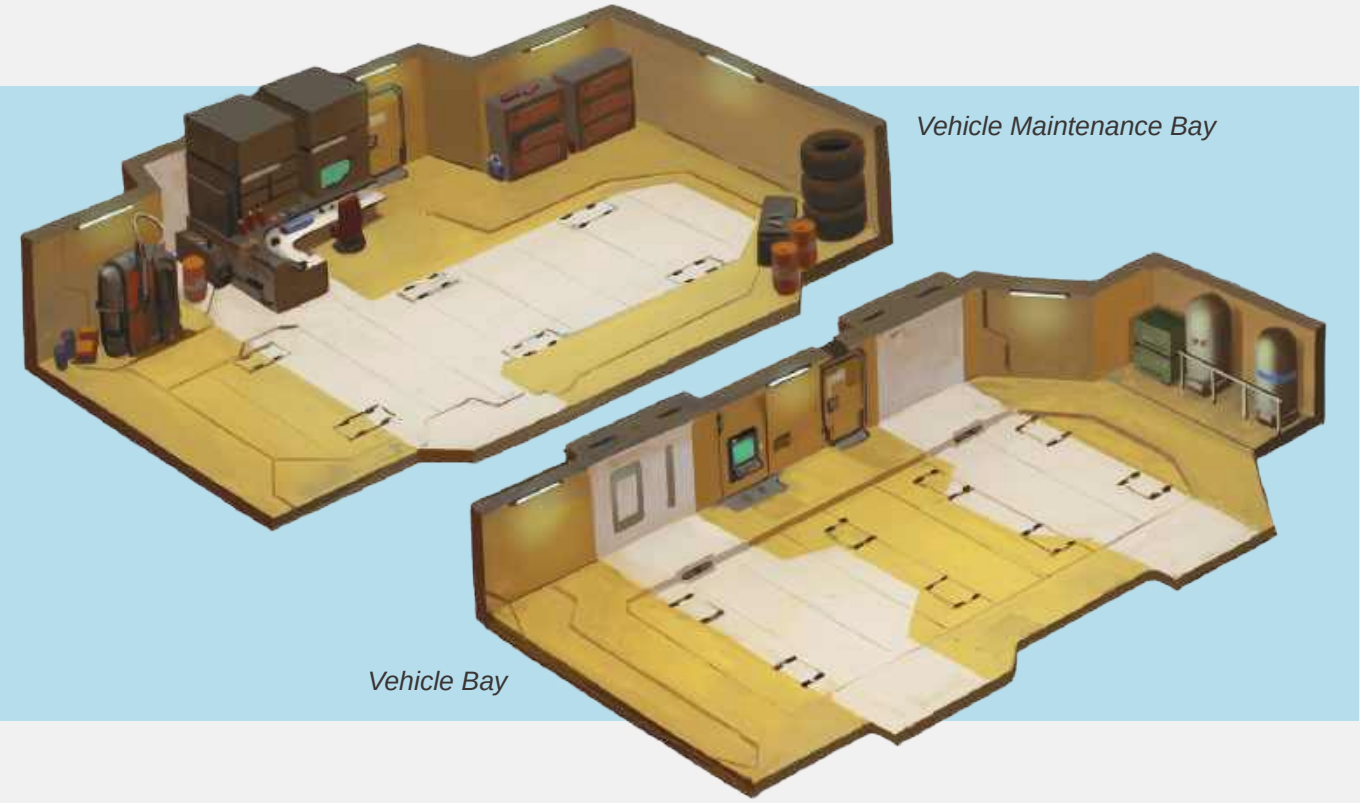
VEHICLE BAY (TL8)

Whilst standard docking space can be used for vehicles, it tends to be tailored to use by spacecraft rather than for delivery of craft to a planetary surface. A simple bay and ramp will suffice for most ground vehicles, although some examples use an elevator system to allow a craft to be deposited or picked up without landing the ship. Delivery or pickup without a landing requires a Difficult (10+) Pilot check, with modifiers for wind or other adverse conditions. Failure indicates a sudden drop which causes 1D damage to the vehicle per point of negative Effect. The vehicle then ends up on the ground, which may require another attempt at pickup. This assumes a ground vehicle or watercraft; grav vehicles can simply fly into the bay.

A vehicle bay takes up 10% more tonnage than the vehicle it is intended to carry, which includes delivery and recovery systems. Cost is MCr0.1 per ton.

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE BAY (TL8)

Vessels that carry vehicles may require a maintenance and repair area for them. This can be improvised from any clear area such as a cargo bay but for heavy vehicles or significant work this is not satisfactory. A vehicle maintenance bay requires 25% more tonnage than the largest vehicle it accommodates and can be used as a garage although it does not have surface-delivery facilities. A bay of this sort provides DM+2 on checks to repair, modify or maintain ground and grav vehicles. Some vessels might have a watercraft maintenance bay instead, which costs the same but is incompatible with ground vehicles. Cost is MCr0.2 per ton.



Vehicle Maintenance Bay

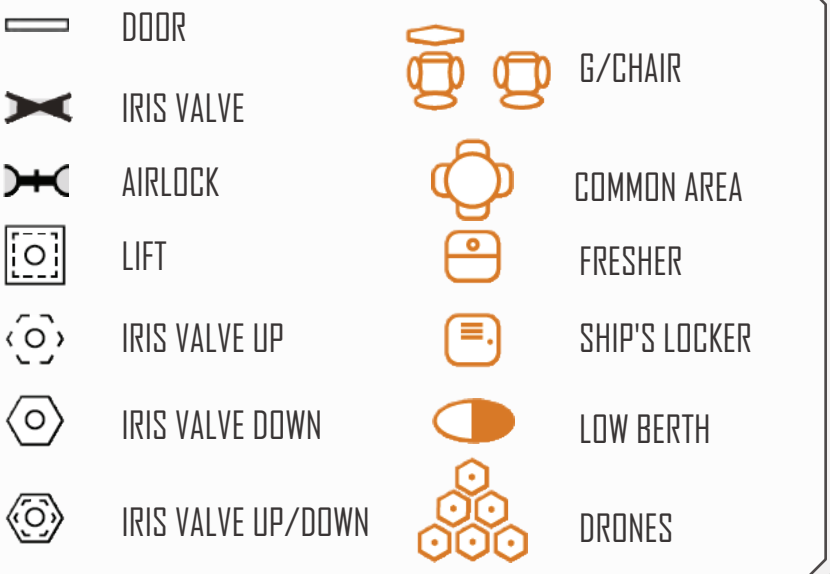
Vehicle Bay

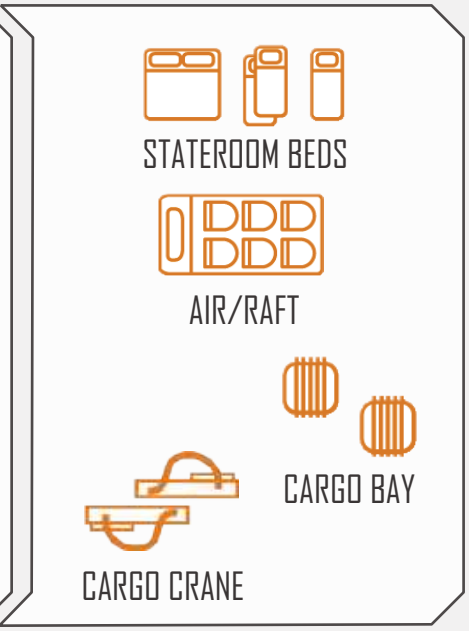
SPACECRAFT

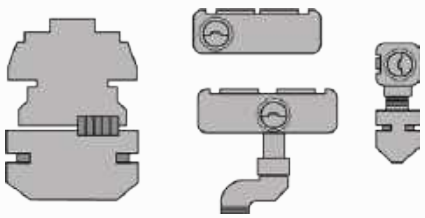
SPACECRAFT

Imperial-standard vessels can be encountered across the Trailing Frontier. They are built under license or simply copied on many worlds and are often bought from Imperial suppliers. Lower-tech versions are also sometimes encountered, either as the result of a local refit or an attempt to build a particular design without access to the right components. In addition, a great many local designs are produced. Some are unique to a particular power or even a single world, but most can be encountered over a wide area, even in Imperial space.

Vessels of the various planetary and state navies of Gateway tend to be small by Imperial standards. A 10,000 ton vessel is a rarity and would be considered immense, whereas in the Imperium such a ship would be used as an escort or patrol vessel. Imperial warships in the 30,000 tons+ classes attract awe and admiration – or sometimes wary resentment – wherever they go. This does not translate to Gateway being easy to conquer and annex, however. The volume of space and the astrographical difficulties make a war of conquest impossible even if it were desirable.

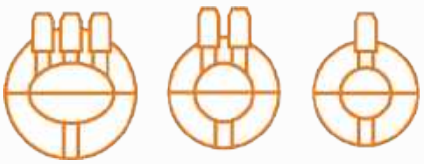






POWER PLANT/JUMP DRIVE/ MANOEUVRE DRIVE/MACHINERY

DECKPLAN LEGEND:



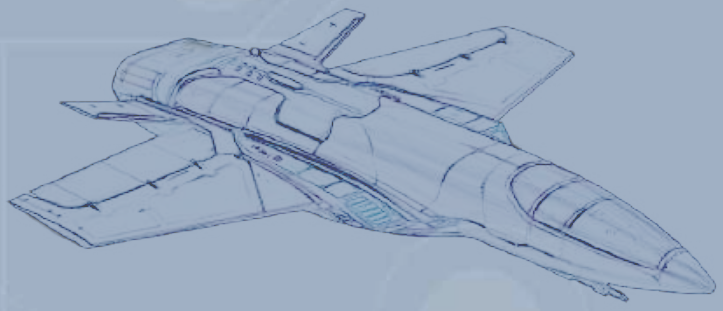
TURRETS

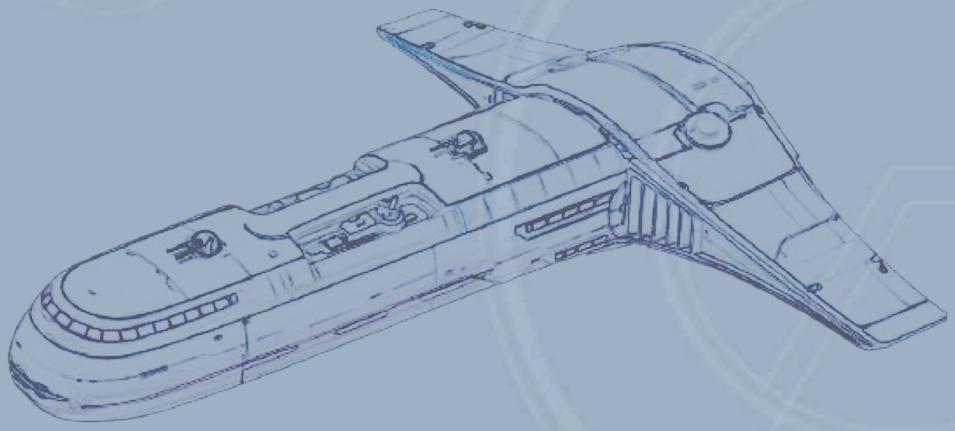
HULL

FUEL

IMPERIAL SHIPS

Imperial designs are quite varied as a result of influences going back hundreds and even thousands of years. Some designs are popular simply because they are common and therefore easy to obtain spares for or to buy at an acceptable price. These mass-produced vessels may be less than ideal for a given set of circumstances but overall, in an area the size of Imperial space, they represent the industry standard.





FIGHTER

CLASS: Halklar Savasci

Officially designated HS-10, the name Halklar Savasci translates from an old Terran language as people's fighter. Designed for and widely used by the Loyal Sector Guard, this craft is intended to be cheaply built in large numbers and operated from the most basic of facilities. TL10 components are used to allow the fighter to be built and maintained almost anywhere. The one luxury this craft possesses, if it can be called that, is a set of aerofins and a streamlined hull design. HS-10 fighters are designed to operate from a grassy field if necessary, climbing rapidly to orbit with the assistance of a reaction drive system.

Performance is rather modest when operating on conventional m-drive but this is sufficient for patrol operations and planned intercepts of merchant traffic. This is the HS-10's primary role, escorting customs boats or 'eyeballing' suspect vessels. The fixed pulse laser is a reasonably effective weapon, and with a total of 8G thrust the HS-10 can bring its weapon to bear quickly against most foes. This is just as well, since the lightly built hull cannot take much punishment. Any hit that breaches the armour is likely to take out the fighter.

Overall, the HS-10 provides a decent level of capability for a small cost. There is nothing much to go wrong with it, making the 'people's fighter', a popular choice among small merchant lines and mercenary units with limited budgets. It is widely assumed that large numbers of HS-10s have been transferred to the Renkard Union, a notion supported by the popular vid drama *Lightning Squadron*, which follows a band of plucky LSG pilots and their unfeasibly attractive support crew as they battle the Lords of Thunder in a supposedly-hypothetical invasion scenario. It is not clear whether *Lightning Squadron* was intended as a serious drama or a propaganda piece but whilst it is condemned as inflammatory in some circles it remains highly popular into its 19th season.

TL10		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	10 tons, Streamlined, Light	—	0.45
Armour	Crystalliron, Armour: 5	3	0.6
M-Drive	Thrust 3	0.3	0.6
R-Drive	Thrust 5 (fuel efficient x2)	1	0.25
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 10	1	0.5
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks of operation	1	—
	54mn (Thrust 5)	0.675	—
Bridge	Cockpit	1.5	0.01
Computer	Computer/5	—	0.03
Sensors	Civilian	1	3
Weapons	Fixed Mount (pulse laser)	—	1.1
Systems	Aerofins	0.5	0.05
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Intellect	—	—
Cargo		0.025	—

Crew

Pilot

Hull: 2

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr716/month

PURCHASE COST

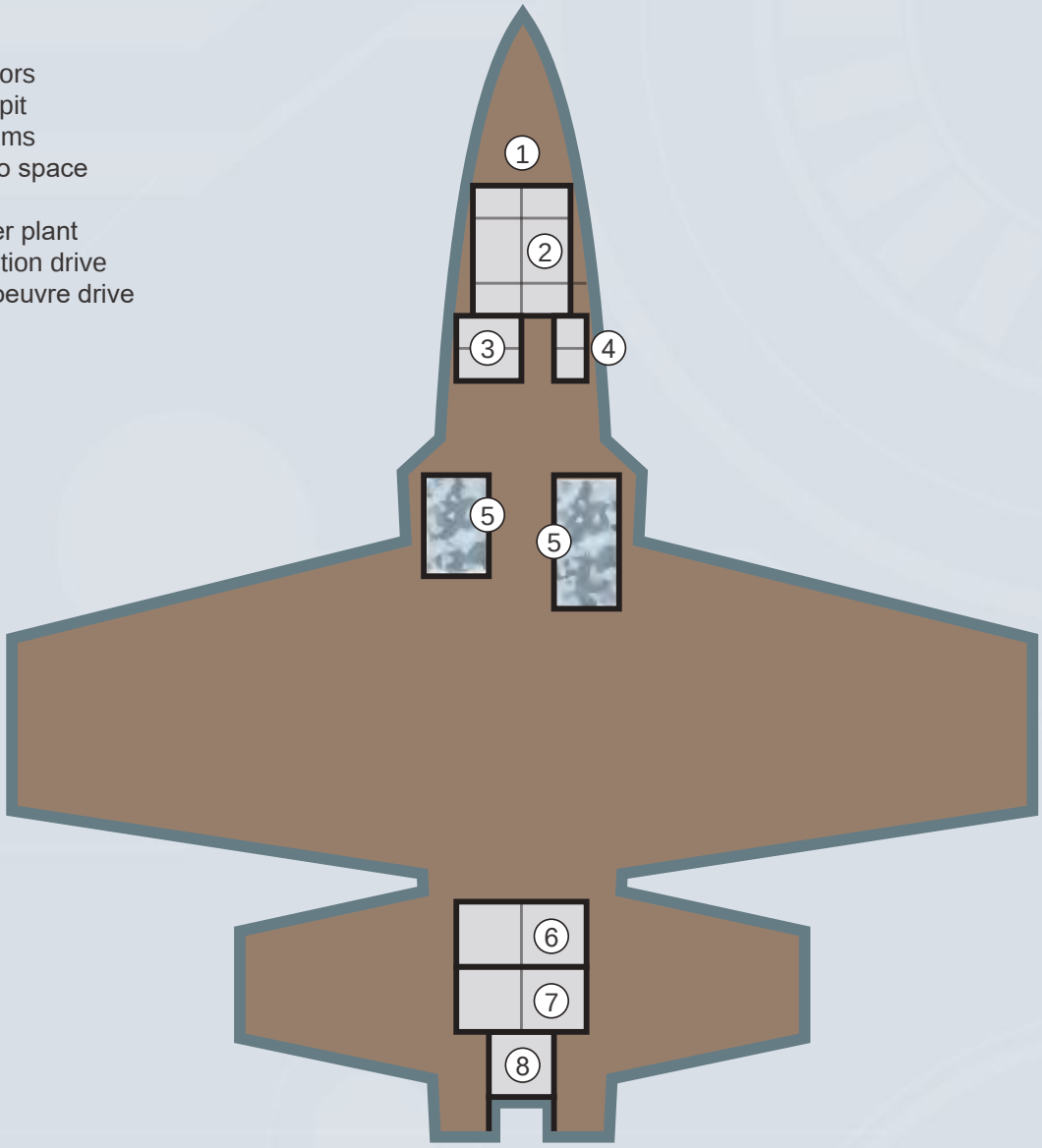
MCr8.59

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	2
Manoeuvre Drive	3
Sensors	1
Weapons	3

1 square = 0.5 Ton

1. Sensors
2. Cockpit
3. systems
4. Cargo space
5. Fuel
6. Power plant
7. Reaction drive
8. Manoeuvre drive



HALKLAR SAVASCI-CLASS FIGHTER

RIFT TRADER

CLASS: Karmun

A custom design built in small numbers in Ley and under license elsewhere, the Karmun was never intended to be viable in short-range local trade. Its jump-3 capability grants an advantage in the high-speed cargo and passenger market as well as the capability to cross a two-parsec gap and reach markets unavailable to other vessels. Although promoted as a rift trader, the majority of Karmuns in Ley are employed on fast runs between worlds 2–3 parsecs apart, outpacing the more tonnage-efficient jump-1 vessels which typically ply the mains.

A fair number of vessels are active in the trans-border region, crossing in and out of Imperial space to reach worlds in Gateway. Karmuns are sufficiently common on these routes that they are not automatically identified as Imperial vessels. This is useful to the navy, which is thought to use the class for intelligence gathering and general auxiliary tasks beyond the Imperial frontier.

The Karmun-class uses a hull form not dissimilar to the Type R subsidised merchant, although it is wider and longer. As with the Type R, the lowest level is mainly given over to a two-deck-high cargo hold. Aft of this on the lowest deck is a smaller one-deck cargo hold generally used for smaller items. Right aft is the small passenger section, which contains only four cabins and a 12-ton common area. On some vessels this is repurposed or used for additional crew accommodation. Passengers access the vessel through the aft bulkhead and are separated from the rest of the ship by the crew area on the deck above.

The forward part of the mid deck is taken up by the upper level of the cargo hold. Aft of this is the crew accommodation and common area plus associated facilities. As built, Karmuns have an armoury, workshop and medical bay. Some users repurpose these areas. The upper deck contains the engineering section and powerplant, with the bridge forward of it.

The Karmun-class, as built, is lightly armoured and armed with two fighting turrets and two defence turrets. Five other turret mountings are fitted and can easily be set up with whatever weapons are desired. Power is a tight if all systems have uprated armaments but it is rare to be shooting whilst the jump drive is charging. Most operators use the turret mountings as additional storage space.

Overall, the Karmun-class is a rugged and dependable vessel capable of fast courier and light trade work or operating in a sparse stellar region. Nominal crew is twelve but it is common for some jobs to double up. Gunners are rarely needed so may spend most of their time working as technicians, drive hands or stewards, whilst most operators prefer to have a backup pilot among the crew even if they have a different day job. A typical setup for frontier operations is three bridge crew – the captain, astrogator and pilot – plus a technical and engineering division with six personnel. Some will be starship engineers, others electronics or mechanical technicians. Another three multi-skilled personnel will fill the gunner, steward, medic and general maintenance roles. Double-occupancy is required in crew berths unless the crew take over passenger accommodation.

KARMUN-CLASS RIFT TRADER

RIFT TRADER

CLASS: Karmun

TL12		TONS	COST (MCR)
Hull	900 tons, Standard	—	45
Armour	Crystalliron, Armour: 2	22.5	4.5
M-Drive	Thrust 2	18	36
Jump Drive	Jump 3	72.5	108.75
Powerplant	Fusion (TL12), Power 720	48	48
Fuel Tanks	12 weeks of operation	15	—
	J-3	270	—
Bridge	Standard Bridge, Holographic Controls	20	5.625
Computer	Computer/20	—	5
Sensors	Military Grade	2	4.1
Weapons	Double Turret (pulse lasers x2) x2	2	5
	Double Turret (beam laser, sandcaster) x2	2	2.5
	Turret Mountings x5	5	—
Systems	Fuel Processor (480 tons/day)	24	1.2
	Cargo Crane (300 tons)	3.5	3.5
	Repair Drones	9	1.8
	Armoury	1	0.25
	Briefing Room	4	0.5
	Medical Bay	4	2
	Workshop	6	0.9
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Jump Control/3	—	0.3
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Anti-Hijack/2	—	8
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Staterooms	Standard x12	48	6
Common Areas		16	1.6
Cargo		307.5	—

Crew

Captain, Pilot, Astrogator, Engineers x3, Gunners x4, Steward, Medic

Hull: 360

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr24377/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr292.525

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems
180

Manoeuvre Drive
180

Jump Drive
270

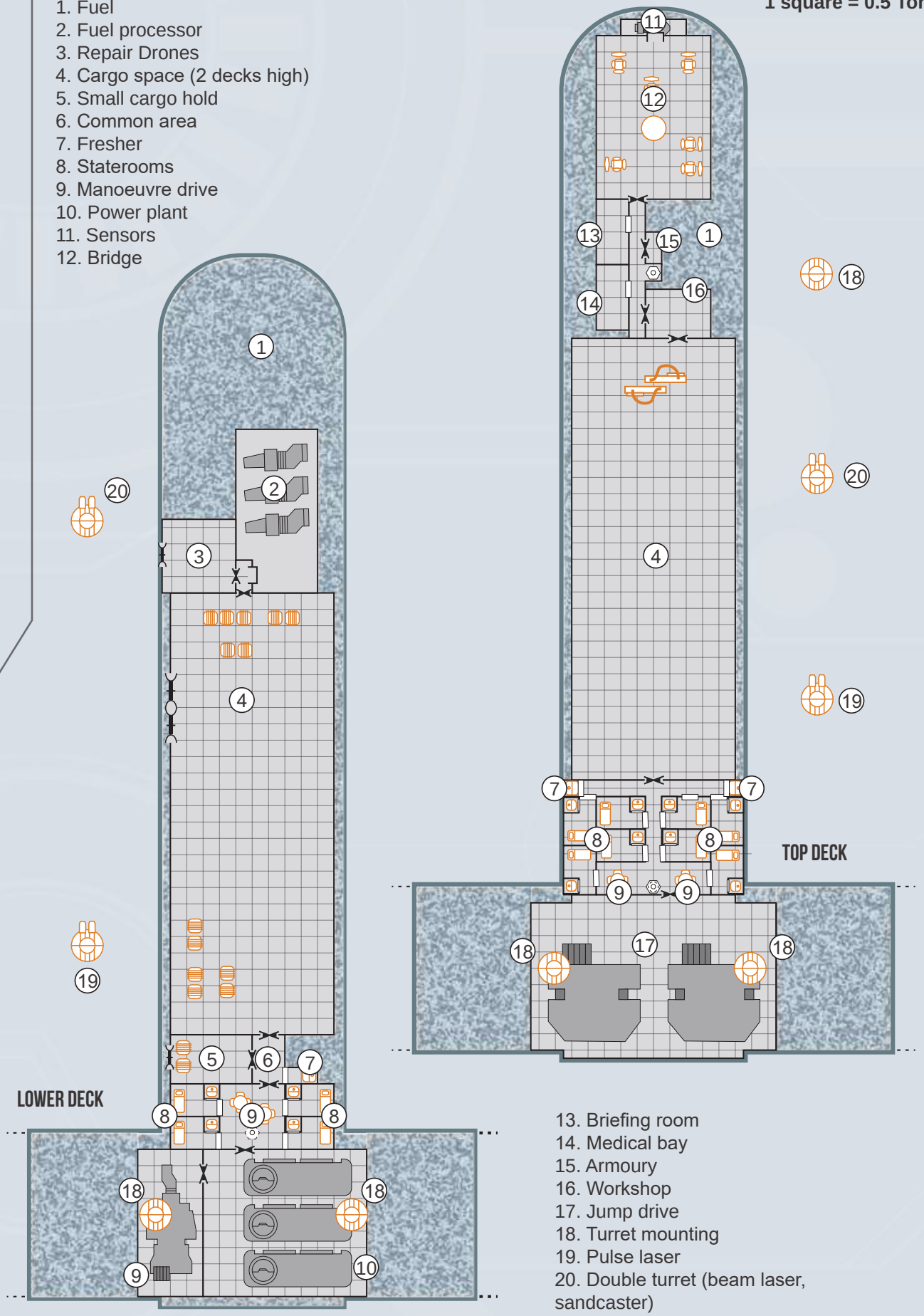
Sensors
2

Weapons
3

Systems
25

1. Fuel
2. Fuel processor
3. Repair Drones
4. Cargo space (2 decks high)
5. Small cargo hold
6. Common area
7. Fresher
8. Staterooms
9. Manoeuvre drive
10. Power plant
11. Sensors
12. Bridge

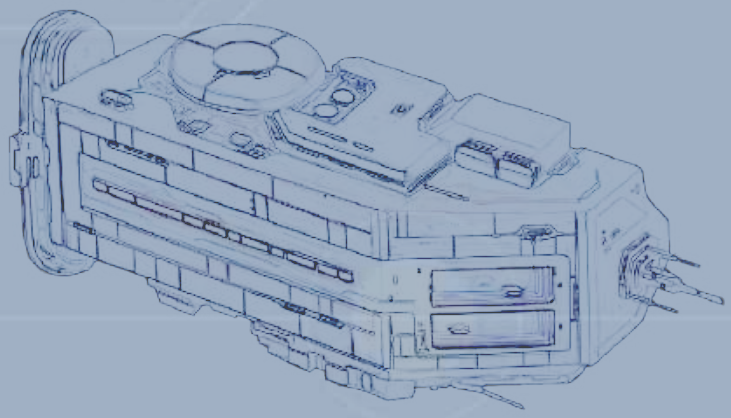
1 square = 0.5 Ton

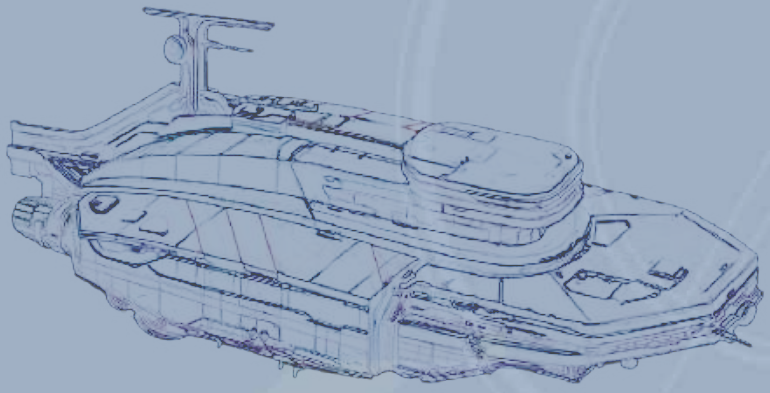


13. Briefing room
14. Medical bay
15. Armoury
16. Workshop
17. Jump drive
18. Turret mounting
19. Pulse laser
20. Double turret (beam laser, sandcaster)

GALIAN FEDERATION SHIPS

The Galian Federation inherited its shipbuilding traditions from the old Galian Trade League, of which it is the largest remnant. The Federation can afford to build larger ships than most other powers and benefits more from economies of scale. Its vessels are sold more widely in Gateway than those developed in any other power, including the Imperium. Whilst the Federation cannot compete with the Imperials in terms of volume of production, the position of the Federation gives a significant local advantage.





DEEP SPACE OPERATIONS VESSEL

CLASS: Abysm

The Abysm-class is named after the subsector it was developed for use in. Built at TL11, the best available in the Galian Federation, the Abysm-class is capable of jump-2 operations and has a modified drive to allow better manoeuvring in deep space. Normal manoeuvre drives are grossly inefficient this far from a gravity well, making operations risky. In deep space, this drive can deliver 35% of its normal thrust, which is sufficient for most requirements and certainly enough to safely dock with a fuel cache or tanker.

Two small craft of up to 60 tons can be carried and the Abysm-class DSOV is capable of skimming its own fuel or buddy-refuelling a similar vessel. Sufficient fuel is carried for a single two-parsec jump plus two months of general operations. If necessary, fuel for a total of four parsecs more of jump range can be carried in four cargo/fuel modules. If a full fuel load is carried there is little room for anything else, and accommodation is similarly cramped. A nominal crew of 12 is accommodated in eight cabins plus a small recreation and eating area. Twelve low berths are onboard to allow personnel or backup crews to be carried.

The DSOV is not an exploration ship, although it can be used as one. Its normal roles are as a support vessel for other deep-space craft or a transport for long-range cargoes. A DSOV can make the trip out to Splinter using its own resources, but cannot carry much whilst doing so. More commonly, two or three support ships accompany an Abysm acting as a transport, one tanker performing buddy-refuelling then turning back after the first jump. This is a lot of effort to keep in touch with one outpost but between missions the ships can be assigned to other tasks. Indeed, a considerable number of DSOVs are in service, many of them sold beyond the Federation.

With sufficient fuel for two 2-parsec jumps, the vessel can still carry freight or goods. This is not a great deal for a ship of its size but in the sparser areas of Gateway getting goods to market is a challenge. For this reason many Abysm-class vessels have been repurposed as jump-2 freighters or naval auxiliaries. With some of the configurable cargo/fuel areas converted to hangars and pilot accommodation the class can serve as an auxiliary carrier, although it remains rather fragile compared to a real warship.

Standard crew is 11 or 12 personnel, with command and administrative tasks doubled up with astrogation and medical or some similar arrangement. In addition two craft pilots are often carried. The usual procedure in such a situation is for the commanding officer and one other member of the crew to have their own cabin, with everyone else doubling up. Given the cramped nature of the accommodation this is very tiring for the crew, making personnel turnover high for most vessels.

ABYSM DEEP SPACE OPERATIONS VESSEL

DEEP SPACE OPERATIONS VESSEL

CLASS: Abysm

TL11		TONS	COST (MCR)
Hull	2,000 tons, Close Structure	—	80
M-Drive	Thrust 2 (energy efficient)	40	88
	Deep Space Manoeuvring System	60	52.8
J-Drive	Jump-2	105	157.5
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 2020	202	101
Fuel Tanks	J-2 8 weeks of operation	442	—
	Switchable Fuel/Cargo Modules (200-tons) x4	840	4
Bridge		40	10
Computer	Computer/10	—	0.16
Sensors	Military Grade	2	4.1
Craft	Docking Spaces (60 tons) x2	132	33
Systems	Fuel Processor (400 tons/day)	20	1
	Fuel Scoops	—	1
	Heavy Grappling Arm	6	3
	UNREP System (100 tons/hour)	5	2.5
Staterooms	Standard x8	32	4
	Low Berths x12	6	0.6
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Jump Control/2	—	0.2
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Common Areas		8	0.8
Cargo		60	—

Crew

Captain, Pilot, Astrogator, Engineers x8, Administrator, Medic

Hull: 800

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr45305/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr543.66

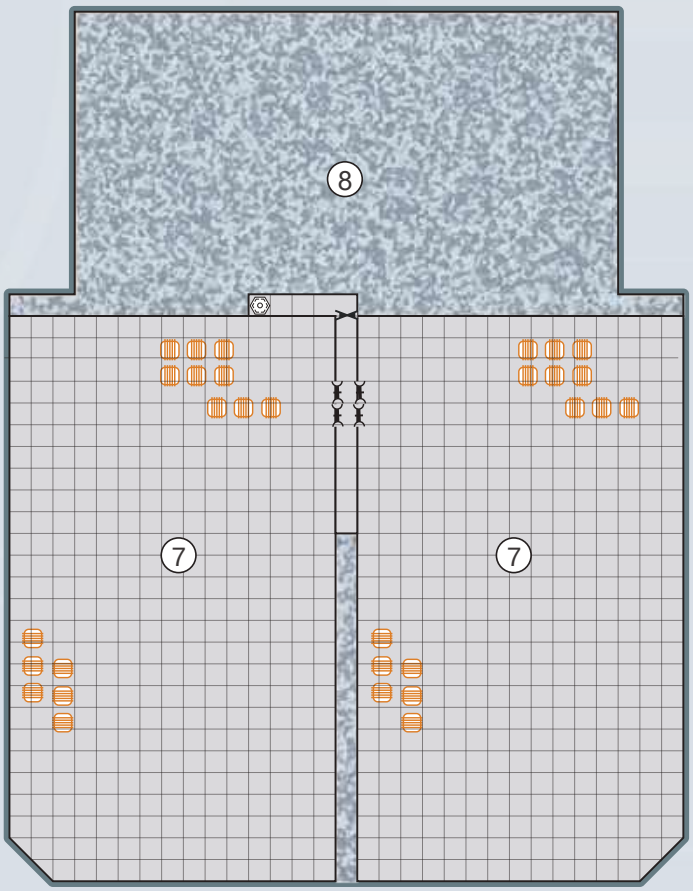
Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	400
Manoeuvre Drive	1200*
Jump Drive	400
Sensors	2
Systems	26

* When engaged on Deep Space Manoeuvring, Otherwise 300 Power.

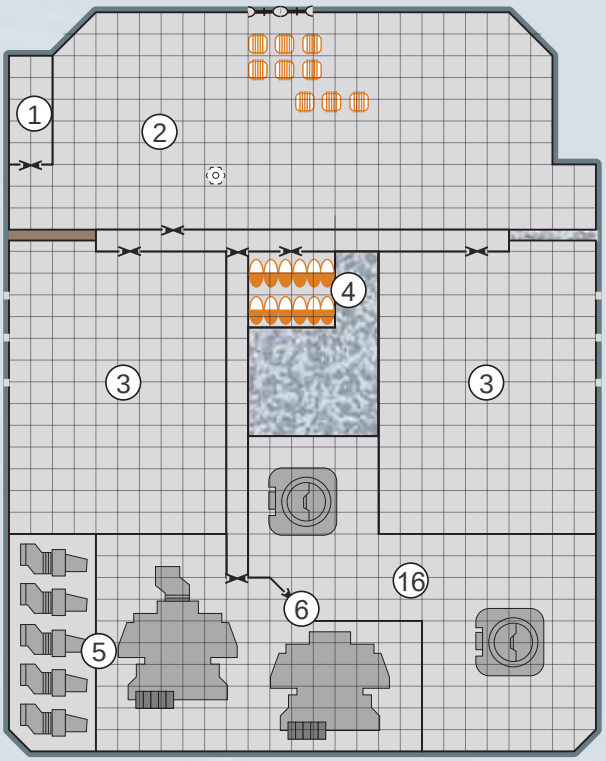
1 square = 0.5 Ton

1. Grappling arm
2. Cargo space
3. Docking space
4. Low berths
5. Fuel processor
6. Manoeuvre drive
7. Fuel/cargo module
8. Fuel tank

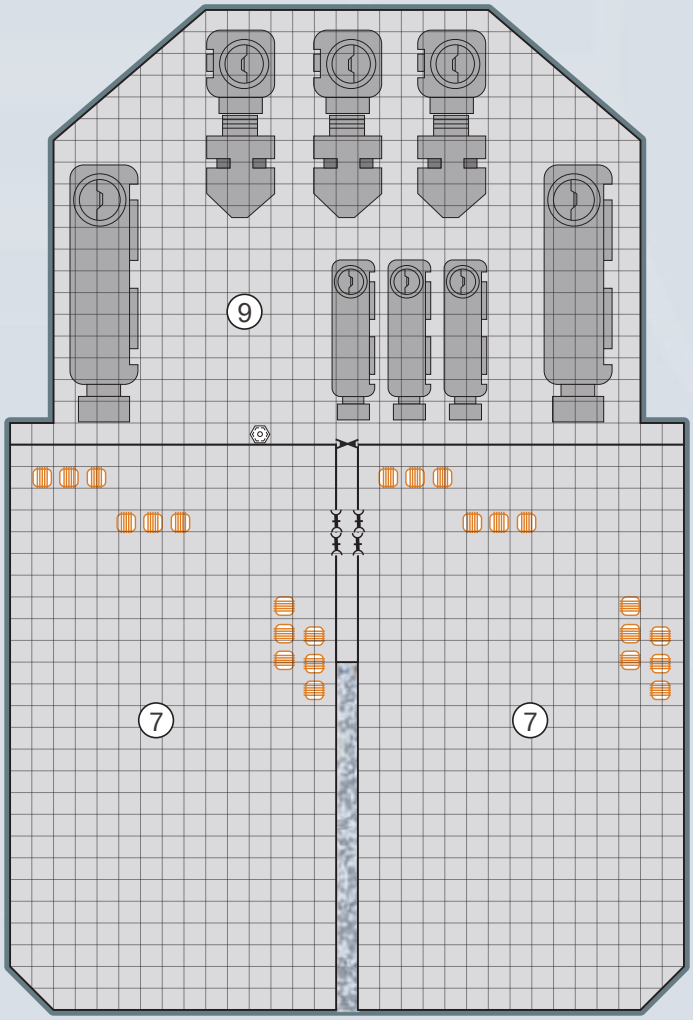


MODULE DECK 1

LOWER DECK



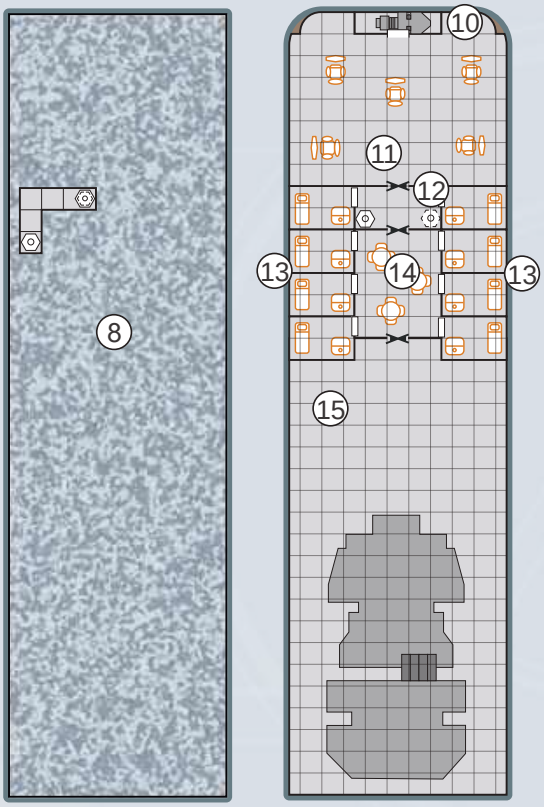
1 square = 0.5 Ton



MODULE DECK 2

9. Power plant
10. Sensors
11. Bridge
12. Airlock
13. Staterooms
14. Common area
15. Jump drive
16. Deep space manoeuvring system

TOP DECK 2



FUEL DECK

PROSPECTING SHUTTLE

CLASS: Collmen

The Collmen is named for a legendary figure from the early years of the Galastrian Metals company, a prospector who made strike after strike and rose from the rank of apprentice to become one of the corporation's directors. She never revealed her secret, if she had one, but her name has become associated with inordinate luck and an uncanny ability to spot good prospects. Although relatively humble, the Collmen is a well-respected workhorse optimised for lengthy operations within a belt or on the surface of planetoids.

Layout is unconventional and distinctly unattractive. A crew working space is located aft, containing the power and drive systems along with an open-plan command and control facility equivalent to a dual cockpit. From here all functions can be carried out, with a crewmember operating drones or mining lasers whilst another monitors the reactor and makes positional adjustments. The control component of the drone systems and laser drills are also located here, creating a small multipurpose bridge. There is also a single cabin, allowing crewmembers to rest on long deployments. Hot bunking is common where multiple crewmembers are carried, with two at a time using the cabin's bunks on a rotating basis.

Forward of the command space is the operations bay, containing the drone launch and maintenance systems as well as a small planetological laboratory. Most of this area is configured as a vehicle bay and on some craft is actually used for up to 12 tons of vehicles or robots. On others, the ramps and wide doors are merely a convenient way of getting samples in and out. The Collmen is a prospecting craft rather than a dedicated miner – there is stowage only for a few samples, although in many cases the vehicle bay fills up with crates as a mission continues. Some operators use ore transports built on the same hull, with a near-identical command area but only cargo space forward. One Collmen can produce ore for a rotation of transports to take back to a parent vessel.

The Collmen-class is also popular with scientists, explorers and surveyors. In this role the mining drones are usually removed and replaced with additional accommodation space or working areas. The vehicle bay is highly useful to those wishing to use the craft as a base for ground exploration but can always be treated as additional cargo space or a general working area.

COLLMEN-CLASS PROSPECTING SHUTTLE

PROSPECTING SHUTTLE

CLASS: Collmen

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	60 tons, Close Structure	—	2.7
M-Drive	Thrust 2	1.2	2.4
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 40	4	2
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks of operation	1	—
Bridge	Small bridge	3	0.25
Computer	Computer/5	—	0.03
Sensors	Civilian Grade	1	3
Weapons	Single Turret (laser drill)	1	0.35
Craft	Vehicle Bay (12 tons)	13.2	1.32
Systems	Mining Drones (5 drones)	10	1
	Probe Drones (20 drones)	4	2
	Heavy Grappling Arm	6	3
	UNREP System (20 tons/ hour)	1	0.5
	Planetology Laboratory	4	8
Staterooms	Standard	4	0.5
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Cargo		6.6	—

Crew

Pilot

Hull: 24

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr2254/month

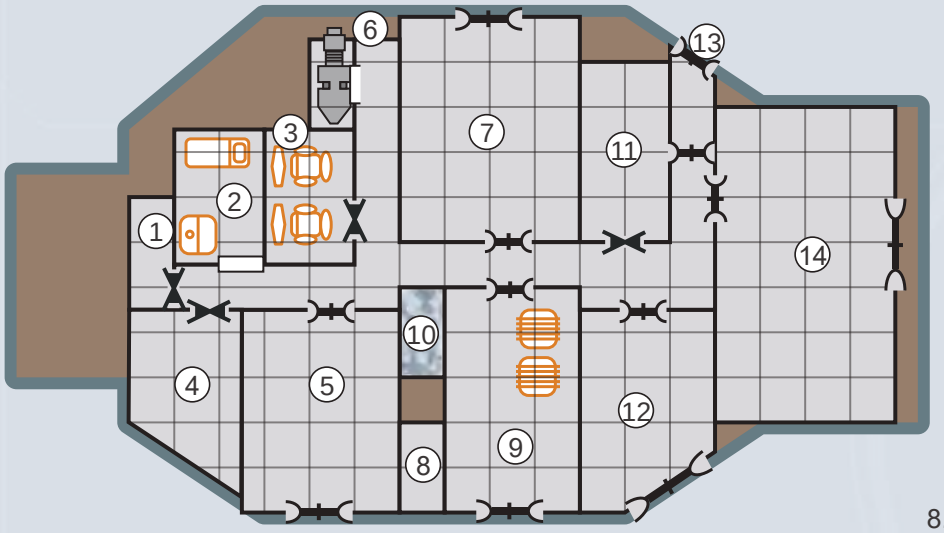
PURCHASE COST

MCr27.05

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	12
Manoeuvre Drive	12
Sensors	1
Weapons	5
Systems	1

1 square = 0.5 Ton



1. Manoeuvre drive
2. Stateroom
3. Small bridge
4. Power plant
5. Probe drones
6. Sensors
7. Mining drones
8. UNREP system
9. Cargo space
10. Fuel
11. Planetology Lab
12. Grappling arm
13. Airlock
14. Vehicle bay
15. Turret

MINING SHUTTLE

CLASS: Jiydyce

Built on the same hull as the Collmen-class, the Jiydyce is a dedicated mining craft intended for much shorter missions. It has the same internal layout, more or less, with an open-plan control area for the ship located in what would be the drive room but the rest-cabin is replaced by a control suite for the vessel's mining drones and laser drills. This allows up to four personnel to operate drones and drills, enabling mining operations to take place without anyone having to suit up and go outside.

The forward compartment is given over entirely to cargo space, other than the launch mechanisms and maintenance equipment for drones. It is common for this area to be open to space during operations, allowing drones to fly in and out without delay. Ore is then dumped into storage bins by a dedicated crane. This could handle cargo if the attachments were available but in its usual setup is optimised for scooping up loose ore without much regard to careful handling.

TL12		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	60 tons, Close Structure	—	2.4
M-Drive	Thrust 2	1.2	2.4
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 40	4	2
Fuel Tanks	4 Weeks of Operation	1	—
Bridge	Small bridge	3	0.25
	Sensor Stations x4	4	2
Computer	Computer/5	—	0.03
Sensors	Civilian Grade	1	3
Weapons	Single Turret (laser drill)	1	0.25
Systems	Mining Drones (5 drones)	10	1
	Probe Drones (5 drones)	1	0.5
	Heavy Grappling Arm	6	3
	UNREP System (20 tons/hour)	1	0.5
	Cargo/Ore Crane (150 tons)	3	3
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Cargo		23.8	—

Crew

Pilot, Miners

Hull: 24

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr1694/month

PURCHASE COST

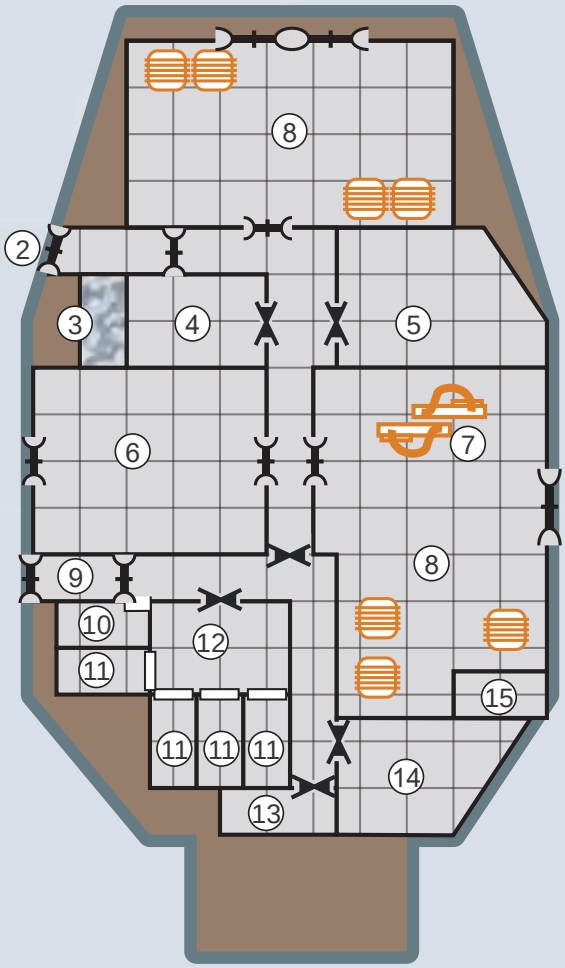
MCr20.33

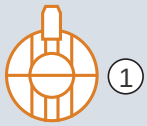
Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	12
Manoeuvre Drive	12
Sensors	1
Weapons	5
Systems	1

JIYDYCE-CLASS MINING SHUTTLE

1 square = 0.5 Ton





1. Single turret
2. Airlock
3. Fuel
4. Laboratory
5. Grappling arm
6. Mining drones
7. Cargo crane
8. Cargo space
9. Probe drones
10. Sensors
11. Sensor station
12. Small bridge
13. Manoeuvre drive
14. Power plant
15. UNREP system

MOBILE EXTRACTION FACILITY: CORE MODULE

CLASS: Torcon

The Torcon-class is one of several designs used by Gateway Metals and a few private operators. It is a compromise between the efficiency of a purpose-built surface facility and the cost-effectiveness of a redeployable asset. Overall design is based on a 'one and three' system, with a jump-capable core segment surrounded by three additional modules at 120-degree intervals. The drives aboard the core segment are configured for operations with three modules attached and fuel requirements are based upon a full load.

The core module is designed to make one or two one-parsec jumps with three specialist modules attached, then operate in the target system for some weeks. If necessary the specialist modules can be detached to operate under their own power. This permits the core to return to base using far less fuel, perhaps making repeated runs to deliver more specialist modules or cargo modules instead. If the concept has a major flaw, it is that the Torcon-class cannot easily self-refuel, requiring another ship acting as a tanker or a module containing fuel-skimming shuttles.

The core module is utilitarian, serving almost exclusively as a 'jump tug' for its modules. Typical craft complement is three 60-ton boats of one class or another but the hangar is capable of taking a single craft of up to 180 tons' displacement. The docking clamps are set up for standard 2,000-ton modules but could in theory accommodate other craft. This might require recalibration of drives and systems, especially if the load was not properly balanced.

The Torcon core module is lightly armed with a mix of missiles and pulse lasers, plus a significant point-defence armament. The heavy point defence lasers are capable of engaging a craft out to Medium range but are most effective at Short range. They are more powerful than a beam laser and more consistent, if slightly less potent on average, than pulse lasers.

The primary uses of the Torcon core module are as the centre of a mobile mining base or as the tractor for a group of 2,000-ton craft. Additional module types are available. Pure cargo or fuel-tank versions are used to create a bulk transport or freighter, or to extend the range of the vessel. A hangar module may be carried, usually filled with prospecting shuttles, instead of one of the mining-bases. Some private users have had their own custom modules produced. There is at least one liner operating in Gateway and several cargo ships are known to be in use. Meanwhile the Galian Federation has some vessels in service. These are used almost exclusively to relocate 2,000-ton system defence monitors as and when the strategic requirements change and to deliver supplies and replacement crews to them whilst on-station.

Nominal crew is around 40 personnel plus craft pilots. Most crew are engineering technicians, with other functions fulfilled by the gunnery team. It is rare for the vessels of Gateway Metals to need weapons, other than in the Halverson's Rocks system where tensions with the local government always run high.

TORCON CORE MODULE

MOBILE EXTRACTION FACILITY: CORE MODULE

CLASS: Torcon

TL11		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	4,000 tons, Close Structure	—	160
M-Drive	Thrust 1	100	200
J-Drive	Jump-1	255	382.5
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 5,000	500	250
Fuel Tanks	20 weeks of operation	250	—
	J-1 x2	1,000	—
	Switchable Cargo/Fuel Module (1,000 tons)	1,050	5
Bridge		60	20
Computer	Computer/5	—	0.03
Sensors	Military Grade	2	4.1
Weapons	Single Turrets (pulse laser) x12	12	14.4
	Point-Defence Turrets (heavy point defence laser) x12	6	15
	Double Turrets (missile racks) x12	12	15
Ammunition	Missile Storage (144 missiles)	12	—
Craft	Full Hangar (180 tons)	360	72
	Type IV Docking Clamp x3	60	12
Systems	UNREP System (200 tons/ hour)	10	5
	Medical Bay x3	12	6
Staterooms	Standard x37	148	18.5
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Jump Control/1	—	0.1
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Common Areas		60	6
Cargo		91	—

Crew

Captain, Pilot, Astrogator, Engineers x25, Maintenance x4, Administrators x2, Medic, Gunners x36, Officers x3

Hull: 1600

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr98803/month

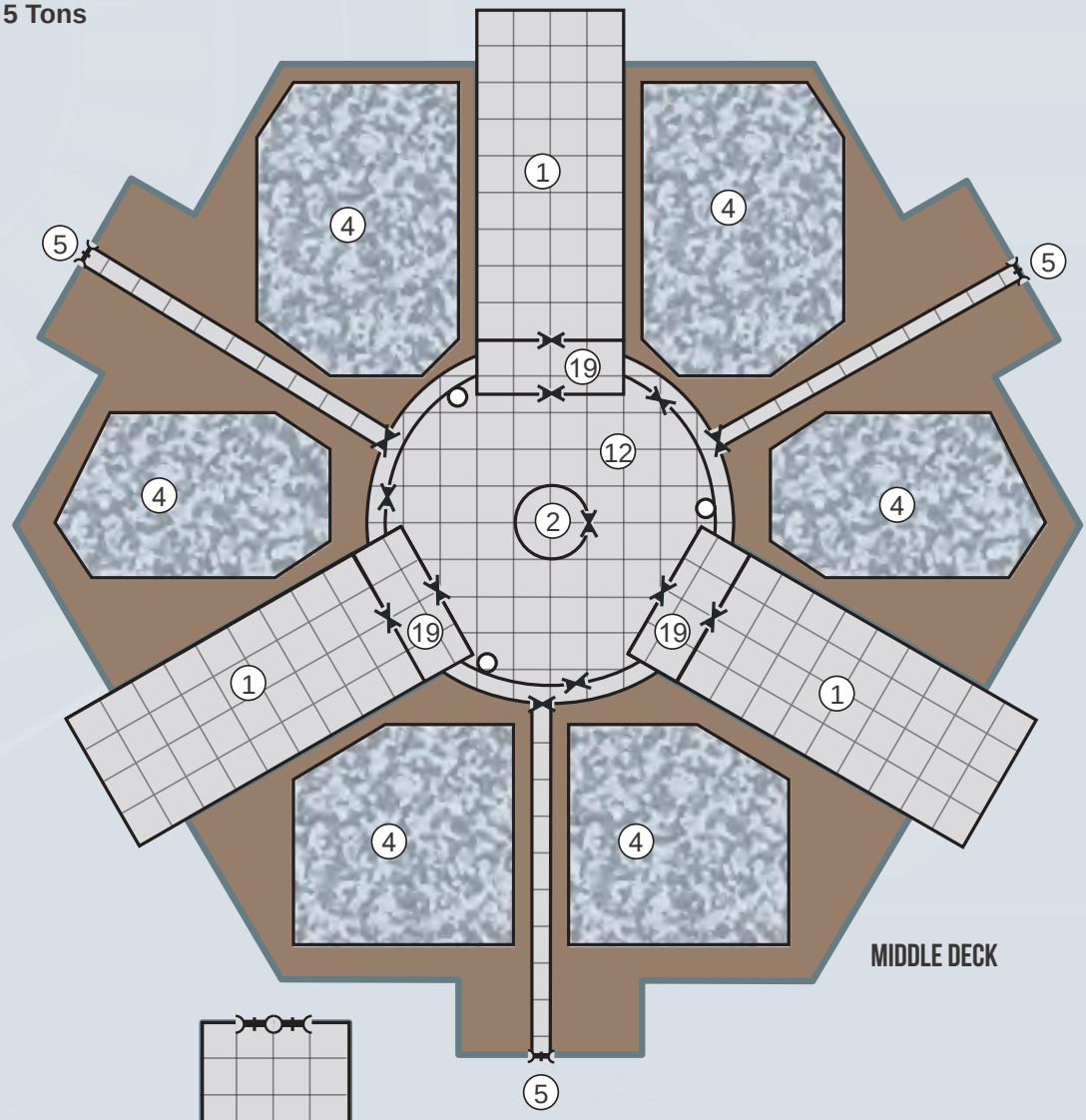
PURCHASE COST

MCr1185.63

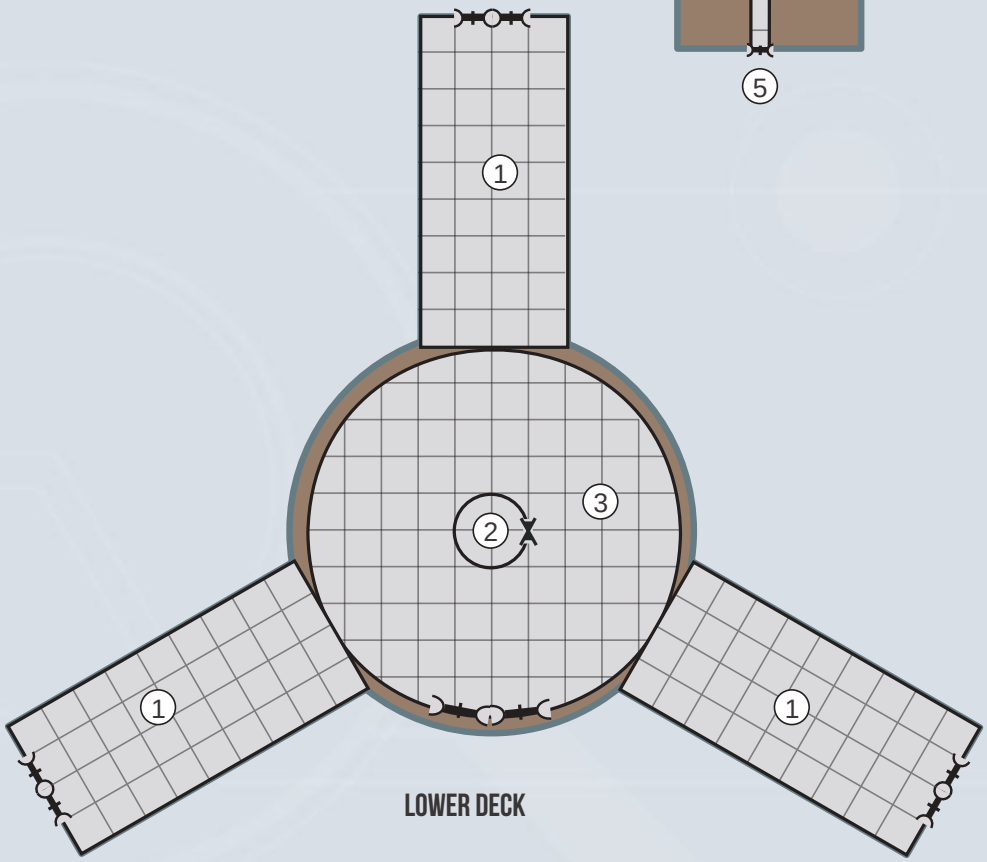
Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	800
Manoeuvre Drive	1,000
Jump Drive	1,000
Sensors	2
Weapons	108
Systems	12

1 square = 5 Tons

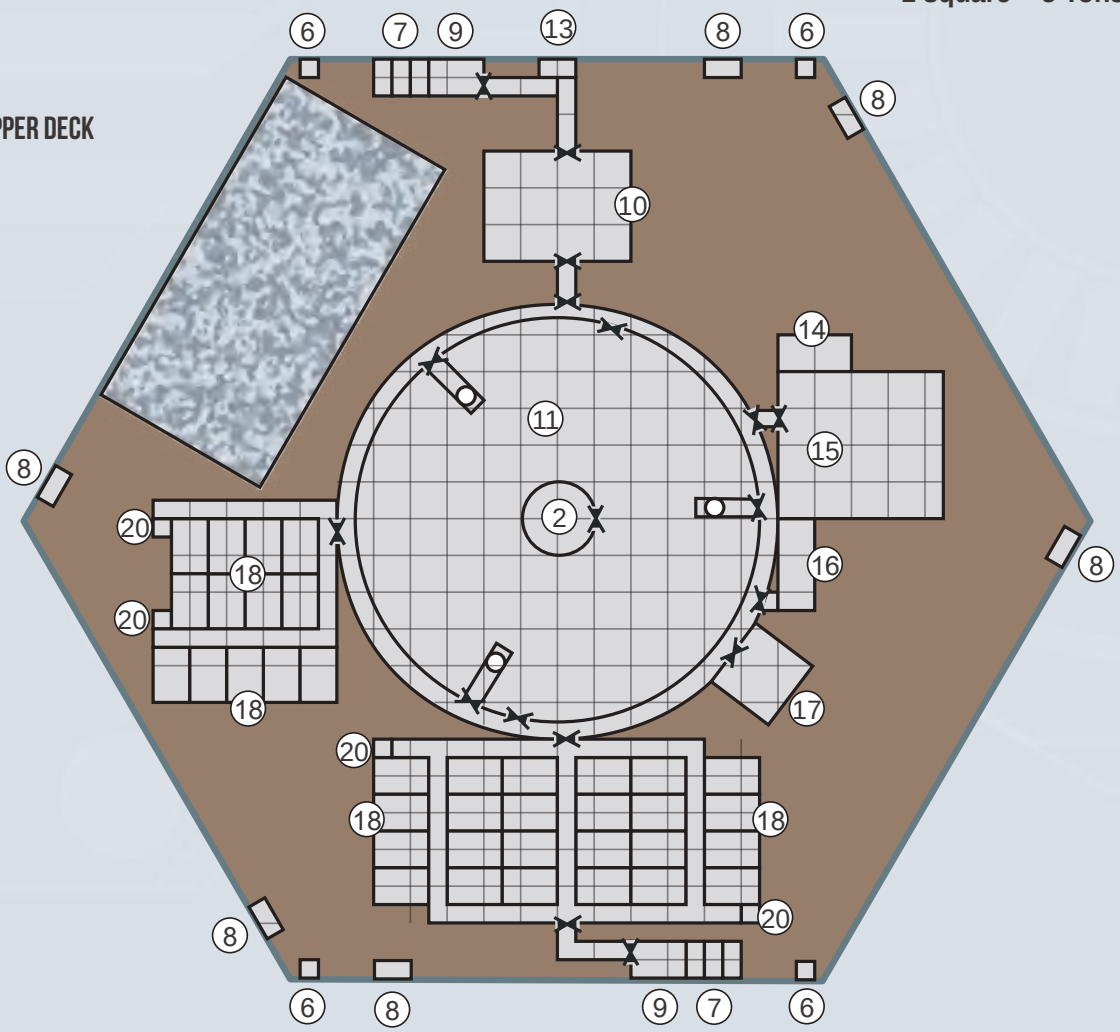


MIDDLE DECK



LOWER DECK

1 square = 5 Tons



1. Fuel/cargo module
2. Decks access
3. Full hangar (2 decks high)
4. Fuel
5. Clamps
6. Point defence turret
7. Missile racks
8. Two pulse lasers
9. Ammunition
10. Bridge
11. Power plant
12. Jump drive
13. Sensors
14. UNREP system
15. Cargo space
16. Medical bay
17. Common area
18. Staterooms
19. Manoeuvre drive
20. Fresher

MOBILE EXTRACTION FACILITY: MINING MODULE

CLASS: Torcon

The mining module is not intended to directly undertake mining operations. Instead it sends out a flotilla of prospecting and mining craft and supports their operations. The module does have a manoeuvre drive but is capable only of minor positional shifts. This is acceptable since most mining modules remain attached to the core segment. Those intended for longer-duration missions are carefully placed before the parent vessel departs.

The heart of the vessel is its ore refinery, fed by the small craft carried aboard the hangars and docking space. Hangars provide space for maintenance and repairs, which are often necessary on vessels operating in an environment cluttered with waste from the processing operation. A mix of craft may be carried, including prospecting and mining shuttles plus utility craft or fuel-skimming shuttles.

Nominal crew is about 74 personnel, including small craft crews and refinery workers. A light point-defence armament is mounted, with a couple of dedicated gunners to look after it. Other crewmembers are usually trained to use the weapons in an emergency. When docked to a core segment the mining module's point defence weapons are tied into the overall defence network of the ship.

Mining modules are the commonest component used by the Torcon-class, along with cargo modules. It is common for a Torcon to operate with two mining and one cargo module, or two cargo and one mining. Occasionally one is encountered carrying a hangar module for squadrons of fighters, notably in the disputed Halverson's Rocks system. Ore can be offloaded to jump-capable craft for the transit home or the entire Torcon can make the trip when full. More commonly, there will be one or more Torcons in a system, usually with two mining and one cargo modules, and another serving as a support ship with three cargo modules. These can be swapped for a full one, creating a constant flow of ore homewards.

It is not known whether the vessel thought to be named *Craijioa Enterprise* is owned by Gateway Metals or not. This ship appears to be equipped with a mining module and a custom-built manufacturing module, with a third carrying small craft, weaponry and living space. *Craijioa Enterprise* has appeared in various systems, offering TL11 goods for sale at high but just about acceptable prices. It is usually preceded by one or more small trade-scout vessels whose crews drum up anticipation before the main vessel arrives. *Craijioa Enterprise* then disappears for a while, presumably mining materials for additional manufacturing projects.

TORCON MINING MODULE

MOBILE EXTRACTION FACILITY: MINING MODULE

CLASS: Torcon

TL11		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	2,000 tons, Close Structure	—	80
M-Drive	Thrust 0	10	20
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 700	70	35
Fuel Tanks	40 weeks of operation	70	—
Bridge		40	10
Computer	Computer/5	—	0.03
Sensors	Military Grade	2	4.1
Weapons	Point-Defence Turrets (heavy point defence laser) x6	3	7.5
Craft	Full Hangar (240-tons)	480	96
	Docking Space (240-tons)	264	66
Systems	UNREP System (400 tons/ hour)	20	10
	Medical Bay x3	12	6
	Planetology Lab	24	48
	Workshop	6	0.9
	Mineral Refinery (TL10) (200 tons/ day)	200	200
	Ore/Cargo Crane (450-tons)	4	4
Staterooms	Standard x50	200	25
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Common Areas		80	8
Cargo		515	—

Crew

Captain, Pilot, Astrogator, Engineers x3, Maintenance x2, Medic, Gunners x6, Administrator, Craft Technicians x6, Craft Crews x32, Scientists x8, Refinery Workers x10, Officers x2

Hull: 800

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr51711 /month

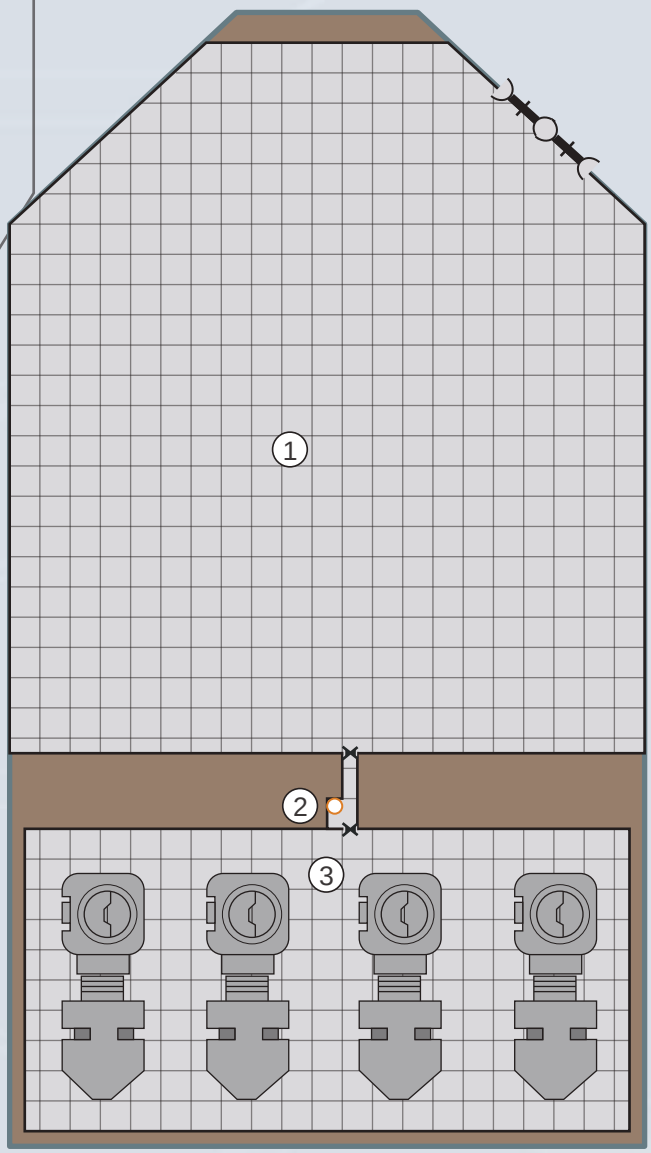
PURCHASE COST

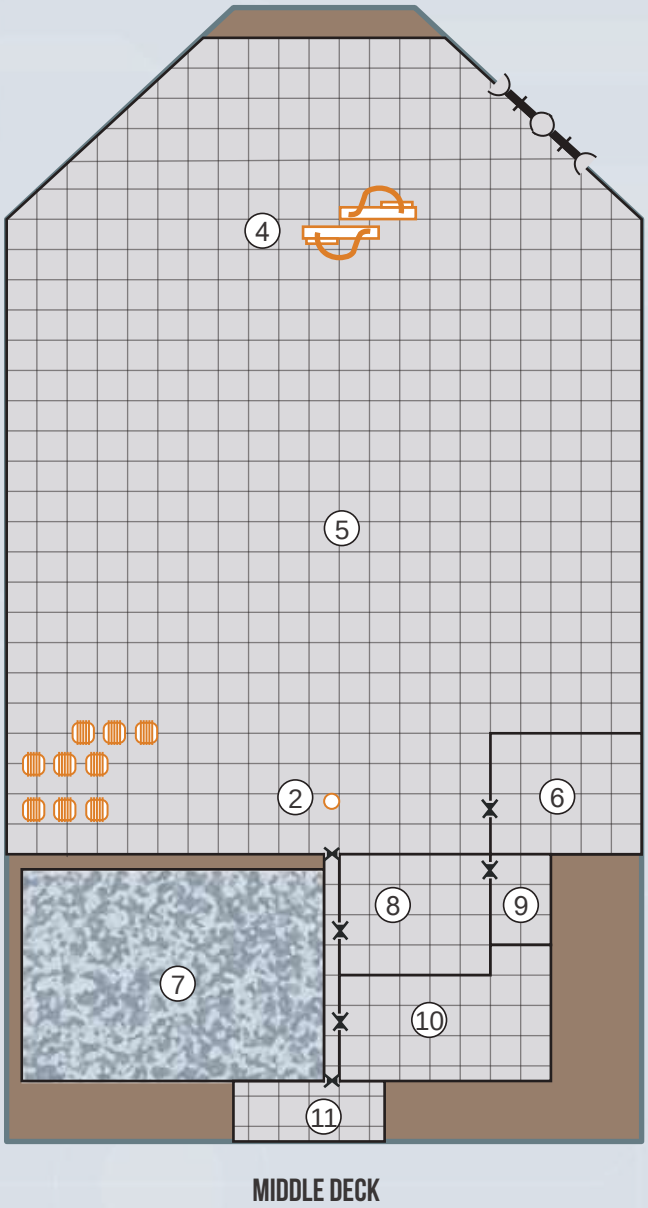
MCr620.53

Power Requirements

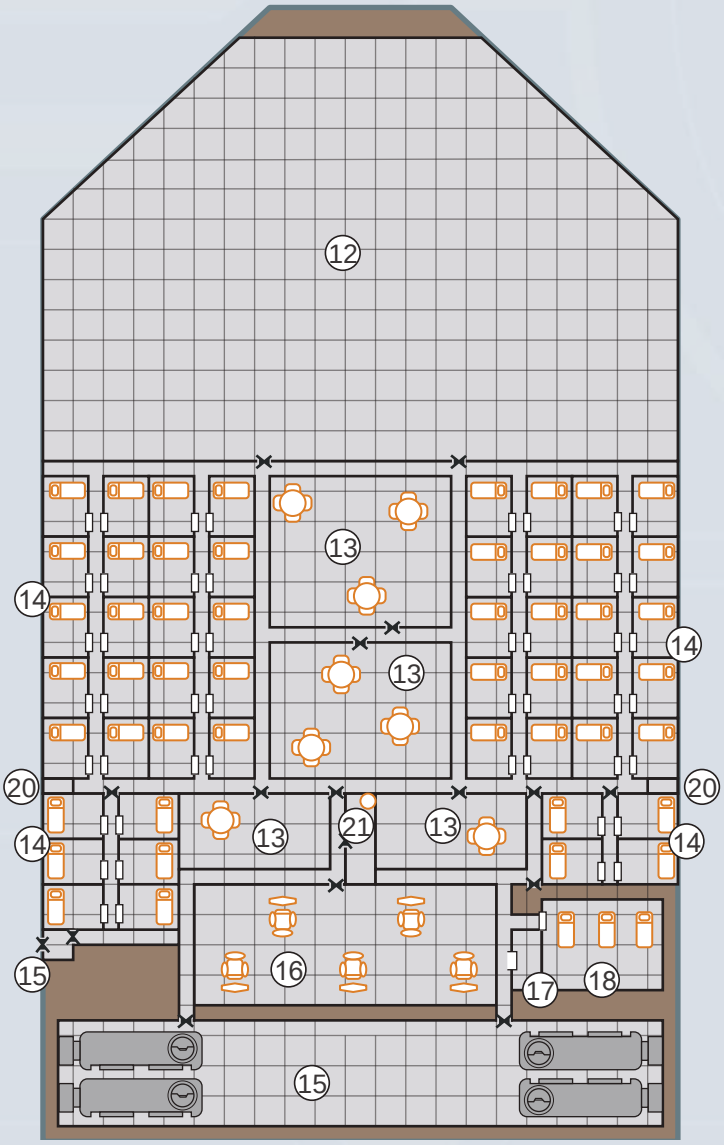
Basic Ship Systems	400
Manoeuvre Drive	50
Sensors	2
Weapons	18
Systems	201

1 square = 1 Ton





1 square = 1 Ton



UPPER DECK

1. Full hangar
2. Access through decks
3. Refinery
4. Cargo crane
5. Cargo
6. UNREP system
7. Fuel
8. Cargo space
9. Workshop
10. Laboratory
11. Manoeuvre drive
12. Docking space
13. Common area
14. Staterooms
15. Airlock
16. Bridge
17. Sensors
18. Medbay
19. Power plant
20. Fresher
21. Access through decks and dorsal turret

GALIAN CRUISER

CLASS: Revonis

The Revonis-class has been in service for decades, undergoing steady alteration and upgrades as operational lessons are learned. It is a large and powerful vessel by the standards of Gateway, although probably outmatched by a much smaller Imperial destroyer. The primary limitation of Galian vessels is in terms of strategic mobility; the Federation is only capable of building jump-1 vessels but most of its systems are separated by two-parsec rifts. Forays outside Galian space are painfully slow and committing a major force in the wrong place could be disastrous. Not only would the fleet take weeks or months to reach its new target but even the couriers sent to bring its new orders would take an inordinately long time to arrive. The only solution to the distance problem is to carry enough fuel for two 1-parsec jumps, whilst the time issue cannot be solved with locally available technology. It is possible that a few ships have been fitted with Imperial drives obtained through the trade missions but no confirmation is available.

The Revonis-class is built using mostly TL9 components but with TL10 manoeuvre drives and electronics systems. Primary armament is a pair of large missile bays located in sponsons projecting each side of the cylindrical main hull near the fore end. A similar pair of projections located further aft carry the ship's small-craft complement. The result is a rather blocky, business-like but inelegant hull form. Craft are recovered at the rear of the twin hangar pods and launched from the outer side. Launch operations are much slower than recovery but the need to get craft back aboard before a quick jump was a primary concern of the designers. Each sponson can carry 400-tons of craft, usually a mix of shuttles and fighters.

Nominal crew is 60 officers and enlisted personnel plus craft crew. There are large cabins for the captain and one other person, which may be the executive officer, an important guest or a mission commander. A group of cabins and a common area designated 'officers' country' provides a measure of comfort for the ship's senior personnel and most of the crew will have a cabin of their own as well as access to a significant common area. This is considered important in a ship expected to undertake long-duration missions. If additional personnel such as marines are carried, barracks accommodation and an extensive armoury are available. More commonly, most of the armoury space is used as secure stowage.

Secondary and defensive armament consists of 40 triple pulse laser turrets grouped into batteries of eight and 40 sandcaster/beam laser turrets grouped in pairs. Each has an associated munitions stowage area, with additional missiles and sandcaster canisters carried as cargo. Hold space is considerable for a military ship, at least on paper, but not all of this space is easily accessible. A number of small holds are scattered through the ship. As built they serve as ready areas containing spares and consumables for nearby systems but on most these areas are used for additional accommodation or to house systems added during a refit.

Craft complement varies depending upon mission. At least some shuttles are always carried but some of the craft tonnage might be used for fighters, gunships or specialist craft. A communications variant of the cruiser is known to exist, which supports small courier vessels operating between critical worlds. These ships have additional hangar space in what used to be the main cargo area. Other variants may also exist.

REVONIS GALIAN CRUISER

GALIAN CRUISER

CLASS: Revonis

TL9/10		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	12,000 tons, Close Structure	—	480
Armour	Titanium Steel, Armour: 6	2,700	135
M-Drive	Thrust 2	240	480
Jump Drive	Jump 1	305	457.5
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 7,500	750	375
Fuel Tanks	16 weeks of operation	300	—
	J-1 x2	2,400	—
Bridge		60	60
Computer	Core/50	—	60
Sensors	Military Grade	2	4.1
Weapons	Large Missile Bays x2	1,000	50
	Triple Turrets (pulse laser) x40	40	160
	Double Turrets (pulse laser, sandcaster) x40	40	70
Munitions	Missile Storage (4,320 missiles)	360	—
	Sandcaster Barrel Storage (1,600 barrels)	80	—
Craft	Full Hangar (800-tons)	1,600	320
	Recovery Deck (50-tons)	500	250
Systems	Repair Drones	120	24
	Briefing Rooms x6	24	3
	Medical Bays x4	16	8
	Armouries x30	30	7.5
	Brig	8	0.5
	Workshops x2	12	1.8
	UNREP System (100 tons/hour)	5	2.5
Staterooms	High x2	12	1.6
	Standard x120	480	60
	Barracks	80	2
Common Areas		120	12
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Jump Control/1	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Intellect	—	—
Cargo Space		716	—

Crew

Captain, Pilots x3, Astrogator, Engineers x28, Maintenance x18, Gunners x128, Administrators x9, Sensops x3, Medics x4, Officers x19, Marines x80

Hull: 4,800

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr252208/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr3028.5

Power Requirements

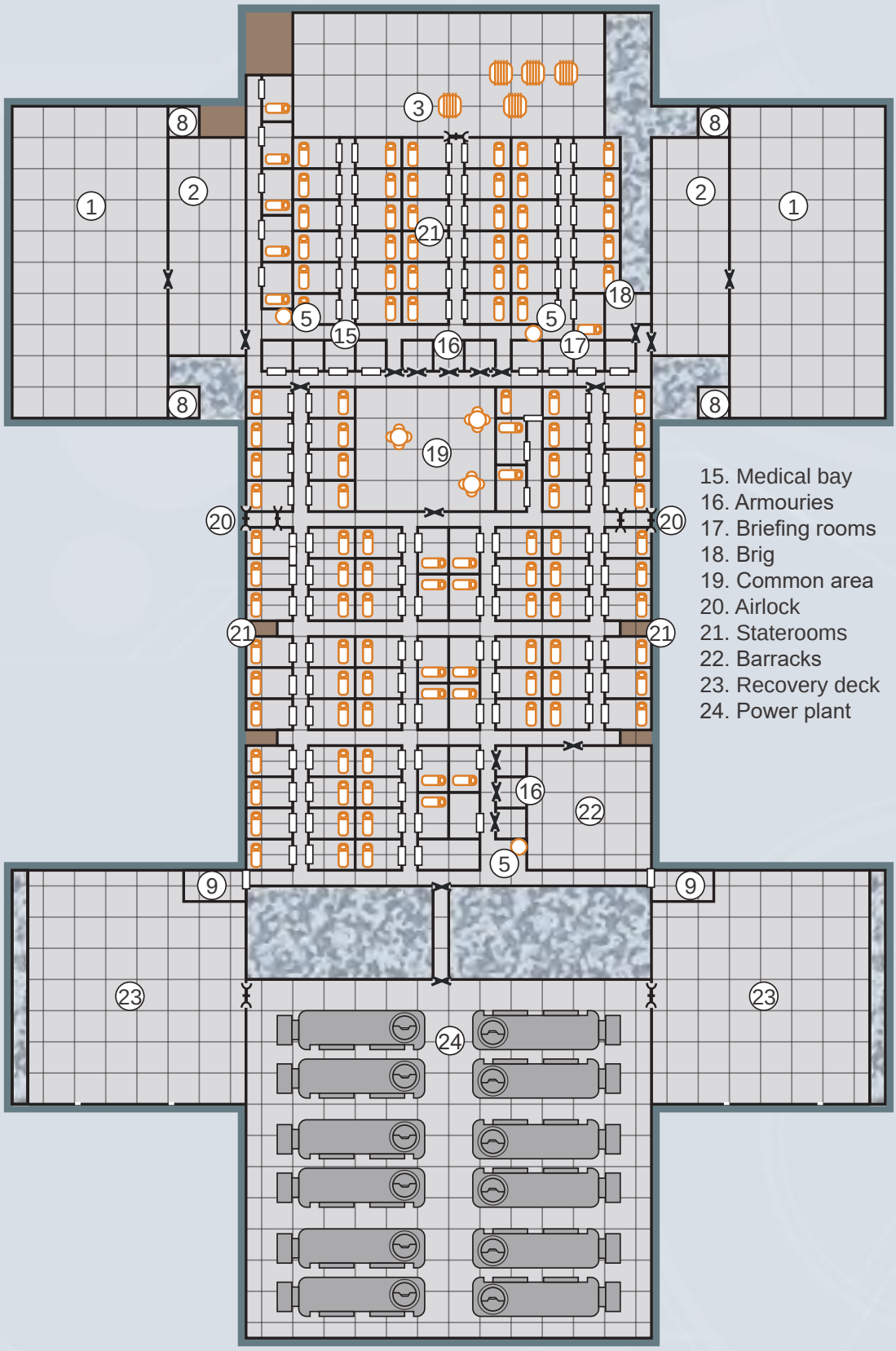
Basic Ship Systems	2,400
Manoeuvre Drive	2,400
Jump Drive	1,200
Sensors	2
Weapons	760
Systems	509

1 square = 5 Tons

FUEL DECK UNDER LOWER DECK

LOWER DECK

1 square = 5 Tons

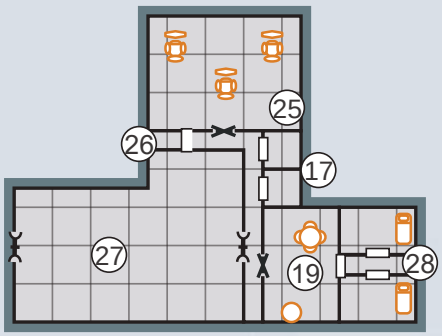


15. Medical bay
16. Armouries
17. Briefing rooms
18. Brig
19. Common area
20. Airlock
21. Staterooms
22. Barracks
23. Recovery deck
24. Power plant

MIDDLE DECK

1 square = 5 Tons

17. Briefing rooms
19. Common area
25. Bridge
26. Sensors
27. Repair drones
28. High staterooms

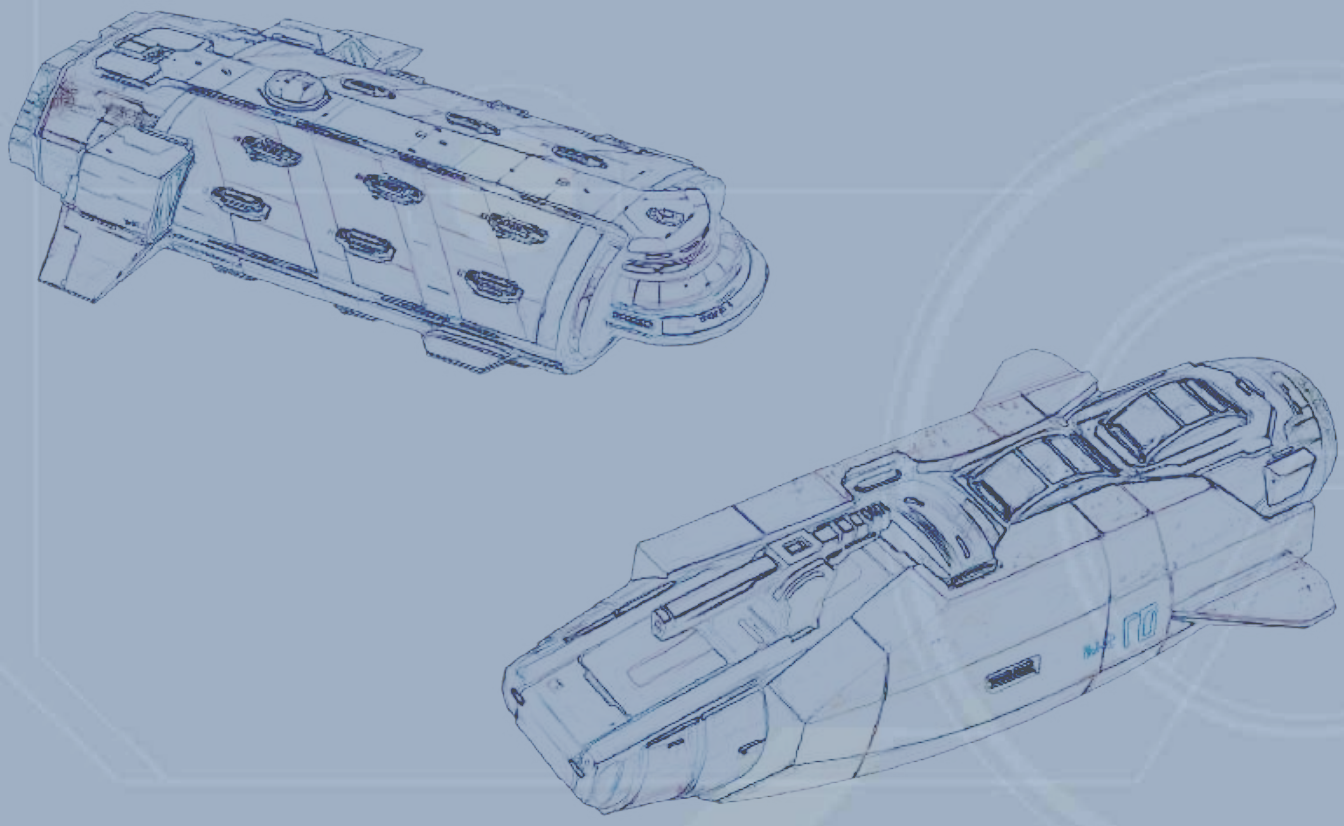


UPPER DECK

MEGUSARD CORPORATE VESSELS

The corporate mindset of Megusard is evident in their shipbuilding. Vessels are constructed with a view to cost-effectiveness, either individually or as a fleet, rather than for high-end capability. This has always been sufficient in an environment where piracy and the odd raid are likely threats. The situation changed when the Lords of Thunder established a border close to Gateway but still the Megusard Corporate thinks in terms of economic sanctions backed by lightly armed vessels rather than repelling a fanatical enemy bent on destroying all G'naak.

The Megusard Corporate operates several classes of Gunship-Equipped Merchant vessel, or GEM ships. These, naturally, have names associated with precious stones and minerals. The idea behind a GEM ship is to create a transport and utility vessel capable of self-defence but which can be swapped to other roles by simply assigning a different complement of small craft. The GEM vessels are built around the standard Megusard 40-ton small craft hull. Various craft are built in this pattern but those most commonly encountered are the Holande-Type cargo lighter and the S-40 gunship.



CARGO LIGHTER

CLASS: Holande

The Holande-Type exists for the sole purpose of moving cargo from a groundside or space installation to a GEM ship and back again. It is configured as a blunt cylinder with cargo doors in the belly and a flight-and-drives pod on the dorsal surface. When landed in a gravity well – artificial or planetside – the craft is supported by retractable legs which mate with a parent vessel's grapples. This creates the impression that lighters hang upside-down from the belly of their GEM ship. A Holande-Type will usually act as the cargo hold of its parent vessel, however, if necessary a second set of dorsal cargo doors open to allow items to be through-loaded into an internal hold. This is more commonly done when supplying a ship than to carry cargo, as loading and unloading are time-consuming when carried out in this manner.

TL11		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	40 tons, Standard	2	—
M-Drive	Thrust 1	0.4	0.8
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 20	2	1
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks of operation	1	—
Bridge	Cockpit	1.5	0.01
Computer	Computer/5	—	0.03
Sensors	Basic	—	—
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Accommodation	Cabin Space	1.50	0.075
Cargo		33.6	—

Crew

Pilot

Hull: 16

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr326.25/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr3.915

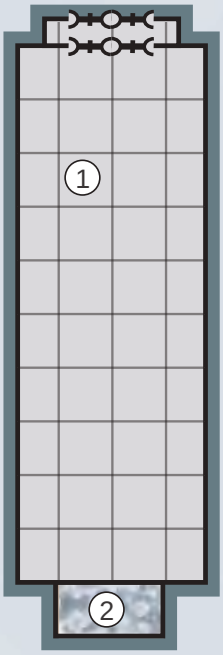
Power Requirements

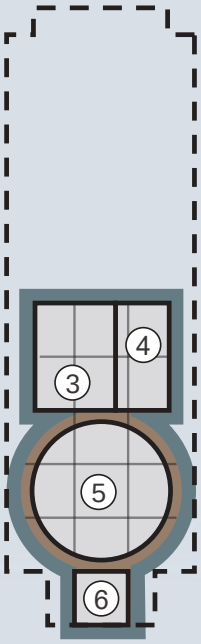
Basic Ship Systems

8

Manoeuvre Drive

4





1. Cargo (one and a half deck high)
2. Fuel
3. Cabin space
4. Power plant
5. Cockpit
6. Manoeuvre drive

1 square = 0.5 Ton

S-40 GUNSHIP

CLASS: —

Built on the same hull configuration as the Holande-Type and other 40-ton small craft, the S-40 is a multipurpose combat craft. The design is inefficient in some ways, being required to fit into the standard GEM recess but it allows a single hull to be used for multiple variants. Other versions mount a fixed laser and a turreted one, mixing defensive capability with pilot-aimed precision. This version has no weapons equipped for maximum versatility, as this is how they leave most shipyards

The crew of two share a cockpit, with a small rest area which serves as access to the drives. As built, the S-40 has significant cargo or configurable space, allowing the craft to be used as a personnel transport, shuttle or utility craft. S-40s in customs enforcement roles usually have an extended personnel area for a boarding party, whilst other variants include a search-and-rescue platform and pilot trainer. Squadrons of S-40s have recently been transferred to the Renkard Union, more because they are available than for their supposed combat capability. However, a mix of laser and plasma-armed craft led by a command variant is thought to be a good counter to K'Kree remote-controlled fighters. If the laser boats can protect the plasma strike units long enough they may be able to inflict crippling hits on the controlling K'Kree ship and eliminate the entire swarm.

TL11		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	40 tons, Standard	2	—
Armour	Crystaliron, Armour; 10	10	2
M-Drive	Thrust 5	2	4
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 25	2.5	1.25
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks of operation	1	—
Bridge	Dual Cockpit	2.5	0.015
Computer	Computer/10	0.16	—
Sensors	Military Grade	2	4.1
Weapons	—	—	—
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Fire Control/1	2	—
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Accommodation	Cabin Space	3	0.1
Cargo		17	—

Crew

Pilot, Gunner or Engineer

Hull: 16

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr955/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr11.465

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems

8

Manoeuvre Drive

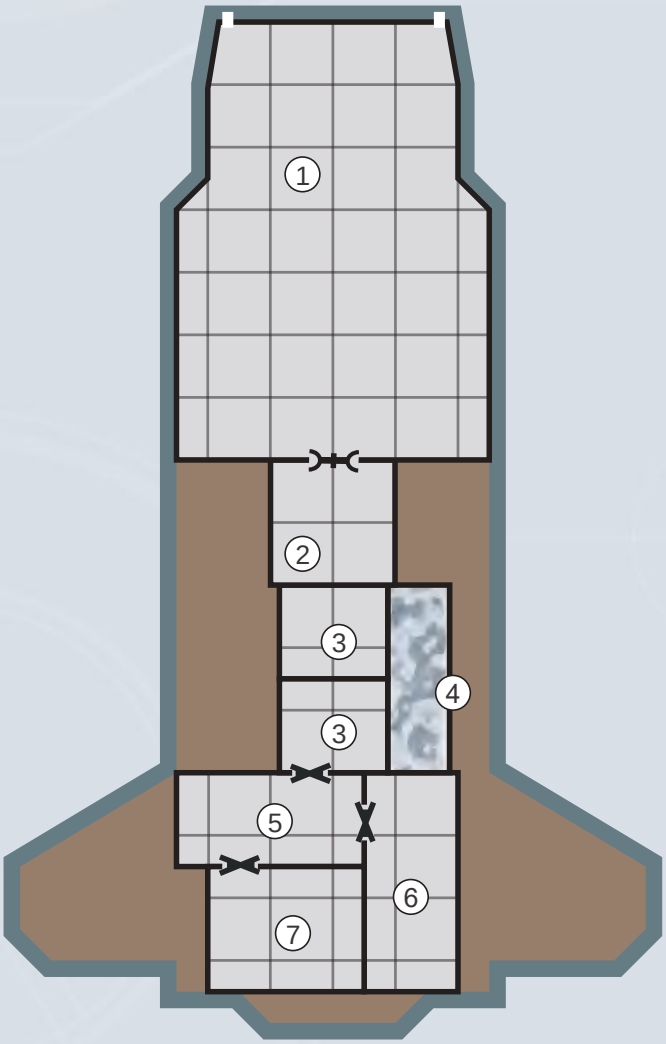
20

Sensors

2

S-40 GUNSHIP

1 square = 0.5 Ton



1. Cargo
2. Sensors
3. Dual cockpit
4. Fuel
5. Cabin space
6. Power plant
7. Manoeuvre drive

GUNSHIP-EQUIPPED MERCHANT

CLASS: Sapphire

The Sapphire-class has a nominal displacement of 2,800 tons, of which 960 tons is composed of 40-ton gunships or other small craft. The main hull is a simple flattened cylinder, to which the small craft clamp in recessed bays. The vessel has an internal cargo bay but when operating as a merchant vessel can carry up to 828 tons of cargo aboard its Holande-Type cargo lighters. If a longer jump range is required, 40-ton fuel pods can replace any or all of the small craft for a maximum capacity of 960 tons above the internal tankage. More commonly some extra fuel is carried, perhaps enough for a second jump, along with a complement of gunships or cargo lighters.

The hull is ruggedised, with light armour sufficient to mitigate a minor weapon attack. Standard armament is light, with six beam laser turrets and six missile barbettes although up to six more turrets can be mounted if necessary. GEM ships are not warships, although they can carry out some basic patrol tasks and rely upon their complement of gunships to deal with any significant threat. There is no absolute standard complement but typically six laser and two plasma gunships make up a squadron, with a GEM ship engaged in commerce typically carrying one squadron. This brings total cargo capacity down to around 750 tons but greatly increases security. A GEM ship on patrol or security duty will normally carry two squadrons plus eight utility craft.

A GEM ship typically requires a crew of 26–30 plus craft crews. This can mean up to 24 pilots, plus 24 gunners or technicians. In practice, a GEM ship might only carry crews for half its craft, or even less, if engaged in commercial operations. The Holande-Type lighters can be remotely piloted from the parent vessel. For this purpose a secondary craft operations bridge is carried. The Sapphire class also has a conference suite which is used for crew briefings and commercial meetings as well as acting as a wardroom for officers.

Crew accommodation consists of two High cabins and 16 Standard cabins plus a common area. This is sufficient for a crew of 26 to have the senior officers berthed in luxury, eight senior crew in single-occupancy and 16 crew in double-occupancy. A secondary accommodation area contains another 32 Standard and two High cabins. This area is used by craft pilots and crew plus their officers and possibly passengers if any are carried.

Most of the time the craft pilots and crew will assist with general tasks as additional stewards, medics and maintenance personnel. If no passengers are carried, it is possible for all crew to have their own cabin.

SAPPHIRE GUNSHIP-EQUIPPED MERCHANT

GUNSHIP-EQUIPPED MERCHANT

CLASS: Sapphire

TL11		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	1,840 tons, Standard, Reinforced	—	138
Armour	Crystalliron, Armour; 2	46	9.2
M-Drive	Thrust 2	56	112
Jump Drive	Jump 2	145	217.5
Powerplant	Fusion (TL8), Power 1,530	153	76.5
Fuel Tanks	12 weeks of operation	45.9	—
	J-2	560	—
Bridge	Standard Bridge, Holographic Controls	40	11.875
	Craft Control Room (Standard Bridge), Holographic Controls	40	11.875
Computer	Computer/15	—	2
Sensors	Civilian Grade	1	3
Weapons	Single Turrets (beam laser) x6	6	4.2
	Missile Barbettes x6	30	24
Ammunition	Missile Storage (144 missiles)	12	—
Craft	Docking Clamps (type II) x24	120	24
Systems	Fuel Processor (200 tons/day)	10	0.5
	Cargo Crane (900-tons)	5.5	5.5
	Repair Drones	28	5.6
	Armouries x2	2	0.5
	Briefing Room x4(conference room)	16	2
	Medical Bay	4	2
Accommodation	High x4	24	3.2
	Standard x48	192	24
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Jump Control/2	—	0.2
	Fire Control/1	—	2
	Anti-Hijack/1	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Common Areas		60	6
Cargo		247	—

Crew

Captain, Pilot, Astrogator, Engineers x12, Maintenance x2, Gunners x6, Steward, Medic, Administrator

Hull: 810*

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr57138/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr685.65

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems

368

Manoeuvre Drive

560

Jump Drive

560

Sensors

1

Weapons

30

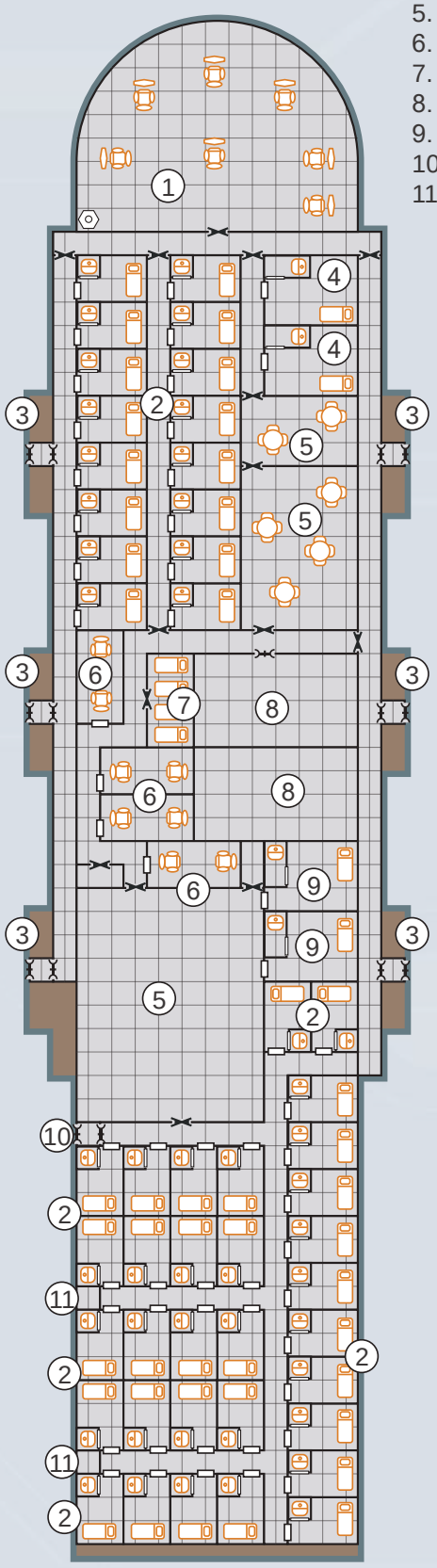
Systems

12

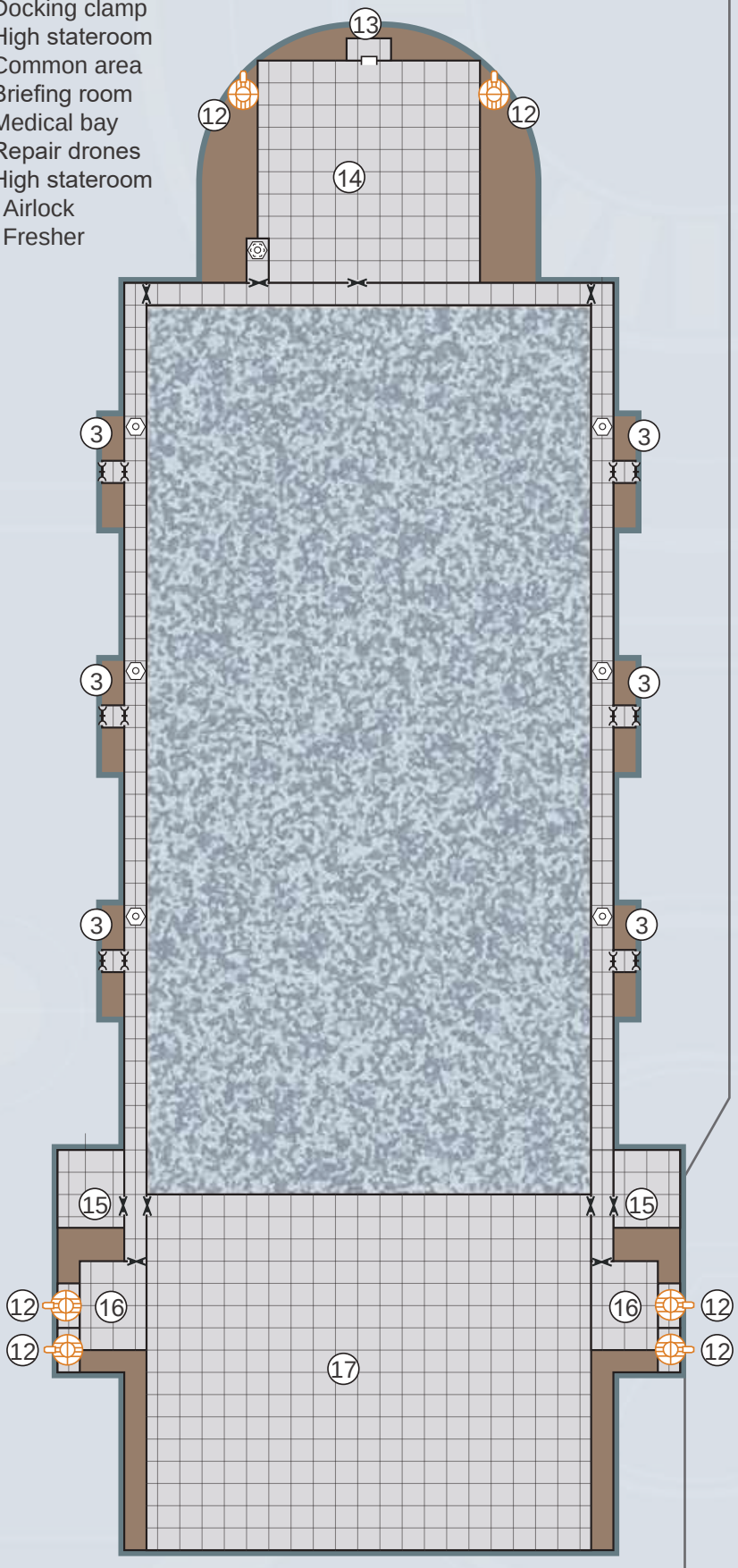
* (1,194 with all gunships aboard)

1 square = 0.5 Ton

1. Bridge
2. Staterooms
3. Docking clamp
4. High stateroom
5. Common area
6. Briefing room
7. Medical bay
8. Repair drones
9. High stateroom
10. Airlock
11. Fresher

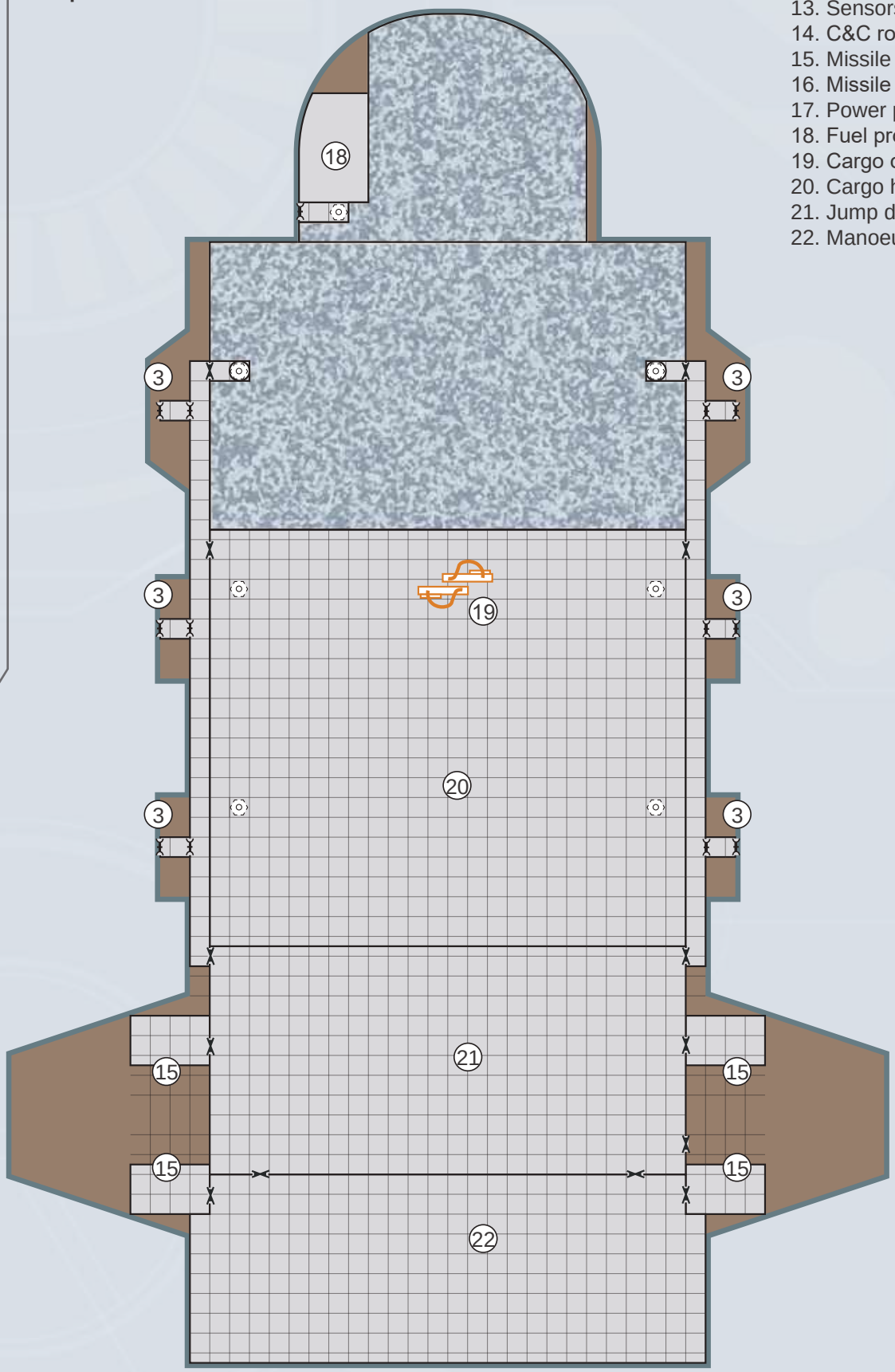


UPPER DECK



MIDDLE DECK

1 square = 0.5 Ton



12. Beam laser
13. Sensors
14. C&C room
15. Missile barbette
16. Missile storage
17. Power plant
18. Fuel proc
19. Cargo crane
20. Cargo hold
21. Jump drive
22. Manoeuvre drive

LOWER DECK

MEGUSARD MESON EMPLACEMENT

CLASS: —

The standard emplacement below is designed to be installed on the surface of a planetoid or moon rather than buried deep within it. Deep-site emplacements are much more resilient but require considerable effort to construct. The Megusard Corporate has solved this problem by constructing composite structures partially built from starship components and partly tunnelled into the surface.

The centrepiece of the installation is a 9,000-ton meson cannon which can attack targets in any direction. It is powered by a prototype reactor which also supplies the installation's defensive armament. This is a mix of torpedo launchers and laser weapons intended mainly to keep missiles and small craft – which the meson gun struggles to target – at bay.

It is possible to build an installation of this kind on any planetoid of greater than around 23,000 displacement tons, of which there are plenty in most star systems. Even in the Sardis system it is possible to find numerous suitable bodies, although many have had to be relocated using temporary drive systems. The design below is not a mobile planetoid-hull vessel but a fortress built into a larger body. Multiple forts could be built on the same body at need, perhaps accompanied by small craft bases and missile emplacements.

Accommodation is quite generous, although the security personnel assigned to an installation live in cramped barracks. This is offset by good recreation and training facilities. Senior officers in particular have almost palatial accommodation – at least by navy standards. Command of a meson gun installation is comfortable and prestigious, if something of a dead-end conferred on older officers or those with less drive. Installations tend to be commanded in a cautious manner by highly experienced officers who have few options in a fight but to win or be destroyed.

MEGUSARD MESON EMPLACEMENT

MEGUSARD MESON EMPLACEMENT

CLASS: —

TL11		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	15,000 tons, Buffered Planetoid	—	60
Armour	Crystaliron, Armour; 10 (+4 for Buffered Planetoid construction)	1,875	375
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12 prototype, increased size), Power 4,500	375	2250
Fuel Tanks	16 weeks of operation	156	—
Bridge		60	75
Computer	Core/40	—	45
Sensors	Military Grade	2	4.1
Weapons	Meson Cannon (prototype, increased size)	9,000	12000
	Torpedo Barbettes x9	45	27
	Double Turrets (pulse laser) x18	18	45
Ammunition	Torpedo Storage (162 torpedoes)	54	—
Armoured Bulkheads	Bridge	6	1.2
	Meson Gun	900	180
	Power Plant	37.5	7.5
Systems	Armouries x10	10	2.5
	Medical Bays x2	8	4
	Workshops x4	24	3.6
	Brig	4	0.25
	Training Facilities x30	60	12
	Briefing Room	4	0.5
Craft	Full Hangar (500 tons)	1,000	200
Staterooms	Luxury x2	20	3
	High x6	36	4.8
	Standard x40	160	20
	Barracks (Capacity 30) x3	90	4.3
Software	Anti-Hijack/1	—	6
	Electronic Warfare/1	—	15
	Fire Control/3	—	6
	Point Defence/1	—	8
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Common Areas		250	25
Cargo		805.5	—

Crew

Captain, Engineers x8, Maintenance x22, Gunners x95, Medic, Administrators x6, Marines x30, Officers x13

Hull: 9,000

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

MCr1.2821/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr15384.95

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems

3,000

Sensors

2

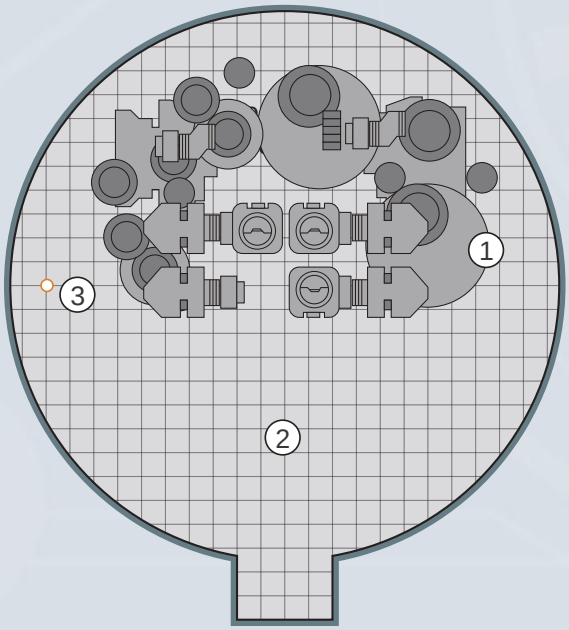
Weapons

1,108

Systems

62

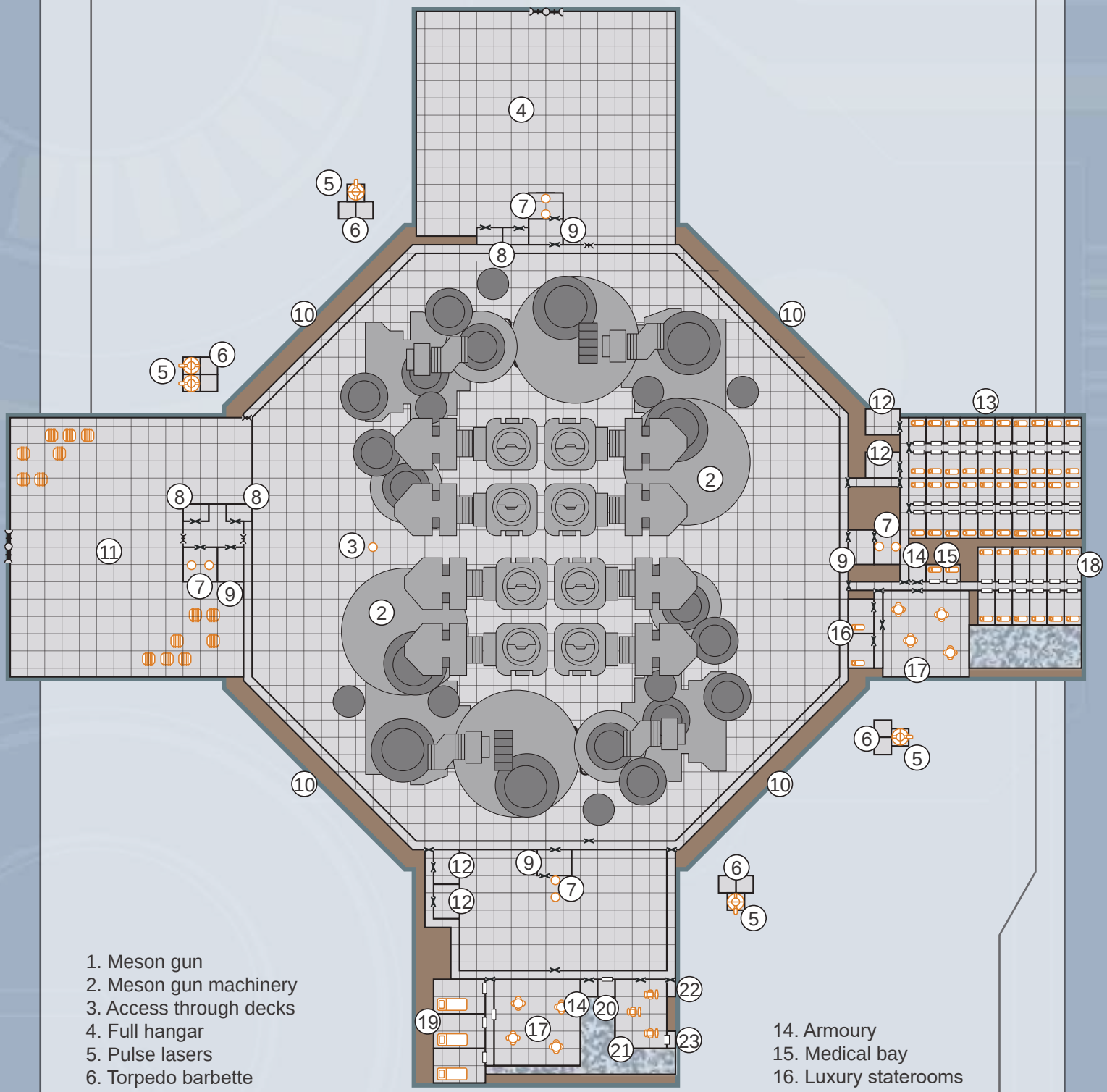
1 square = 5 Tons



UPPER DECK
(2 DECKS HIGH)

1. Meson gun
2. Meson gun machinery
3. Access through decks
4. Full hangar
5. Pulse lasers
6. Torpedo barbette
7. Access to dorsal weapons
8. Workshop
9. Torpedo storage
10. Meson gun bulkhead
11. Cargo hold
12. Training Facilities
13. Staterooms
14. Armoury
15. Medical bay
16. Luxury staterooms
17. Common area
18. high staterooms
19. Barracks
20. briefing room
21. Bridge
22. Brig
23. Sensors

1 square = 5 Tons

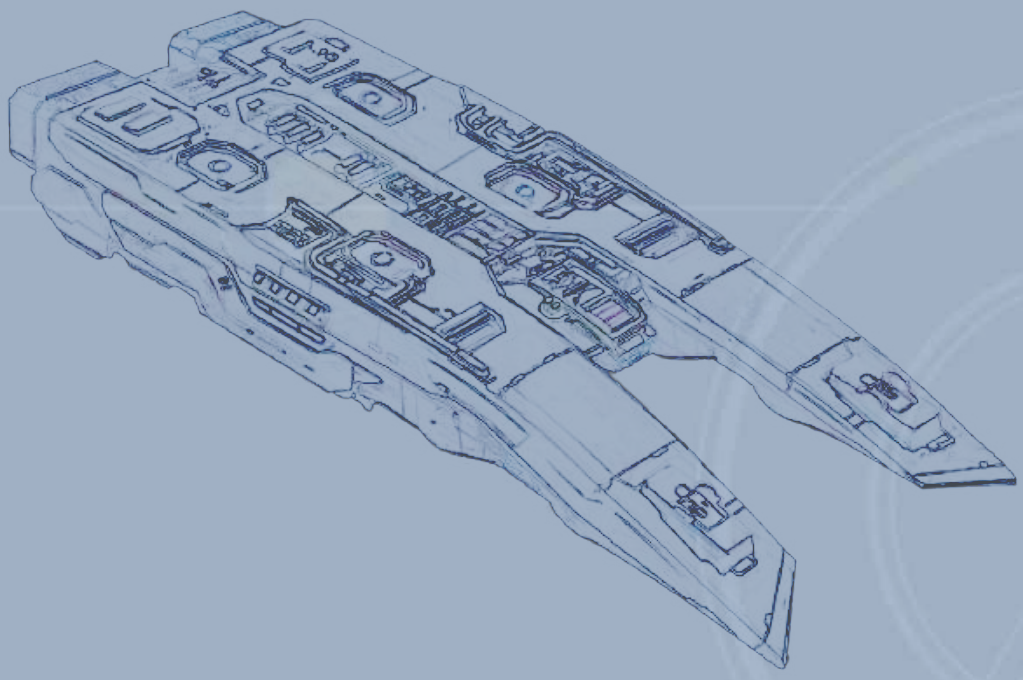


1. Meson gun
2. Meson gun machinery
3. Access through decks
4. Full hangar
5. Pulse lasers
6. Torpedo barbette
7. Access to dorsal weapons
8. Workshop
9. Torpedo storage
10. Meson gun bulkhead
11. Cargo hold
12. Training Facilities
13. Staterooms
14. Armoury
15. Medical bay
16. Luxury staterooms
17. Common area
18. High staterooms
19. Barracks
20. Briefing room
21. Bridge
22. Brig
23. Sensors

LOWER DECK

RENKARD UNION VESSELS

The Renkard Union has never had a particularly coherent starship building strategy. A great variety of short-run classes and one-off designs are produced locally, with a basic level of interoperability. It is generally possible to move from one Renkard vessel to another without requiring retraining but there will always be slight differences in layout and systems. This is a minor inconvenience in the commercial shipping world and a potentially deadly flaw now the Union needs a properly organised navy.



MULTIROLE VESSEL

CLASS: Piramion

The Piramion-class is an example – some might say a symptom – of Renkard defensive thinking. It is a simple vessel designed to be produced in great numbers by almost any yard. Basic hull form is a lightly-armoured broad wedge with the bridge nestling between two elongated prongs. This gives the craft a sleek and deadly look not matched by its capabilities. The Piramion-class is designed for cost-effectiveness rather than combat efficiency, enabling the Renkard Union to crash-build large numbers of ships in a short time. In theory these permit their crews to gain experience whilst providing a measure of defensive capability and will be replaced by more capable ships in the longer term. In reality it is likely these are the ships that will fight and lose the war for the Renkard Union.

As built, the Piramion-class is unarmed, with dedicated space for weapons and associated ammunition stowage. The standard loadout for a combat-configured piramion is two torpedo barbettes at the front of the prongs and four triple missile turrets in mountings on the dorsal surface of the wedge. These are intended to take out K'Kree warships whilst staying clear of the fighter swarm and teaches crew to use more manoeuvrable craft.

One mooted doctrine has piramions operating in threes, with one boat mounting all torpedoes, one armed with missiles for standoff support and another with an all-laser armament to fend off the fighters. This specialisation requires a level of cooperation far beyond the capabilities of the Renkard Union. Whilst it looks clever on paper, this strategy is almost certain to come unstuck in action. Wiser leaders are pushing for the adoption of an armament comprising four laser turrets and two barbettes, either missile or torpedo, whilst pragmatists are keen on an all-missile armament since there are already huge stockpiles in place and more arriving every day.

The Piramion-class can power an armament of up to four triple laser turrets and two missile or torpedo mounts. As built the vessel has no jump capability but there is a mounting for a jump-1 drive if available. This permits some vessels to be converted to a more mobile role. Similarly, space may be allocated for additional hull armour if funds allow. This space is useless for anything else.

Multiple variants of the Piramion-class exist. The most expensive have the extra armour and carry a jump drive with enough fuel for four consecutive jumps. Armament on these vessels is typically four laser turrets and two missile barbettes, with additional accommodation built into the remaining cargo space. Some, jump-capable and otherwise, are armed with whatever could be obtained at the time, whereas others have been diverted to non-military roles as auxiliaries, transports and civilian traders. The situation surrounding procurement of these vessels is, as usual, chaotic and rather panicky.

MULTIROLE VESSEL

CLASS: Piramion

TL10		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	600 tons, Standard (light)	—	22.5
Armour	Crystaliron, Armour: 4	30	6
M-Drive	Thrust 2	12	24
J-Drive	Jump Drive Mounting	20	—
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 300	30	15
Fuel Tanks	12 weeks of operation	12	—
Bridge	Standard	20	3
Computer	Computer/10	—	0.16
Sensors	Civilian Grade	1	3
Weapons	Barbette Mountings x2	10	—
	Triple Turret Mountings x4	4	—
Ammunition	Munitions Bay	24	—
Systems	UNREP System (40 tons/hour)	2	1
Staterooms	Standard x8	32	4
Common Areas		8	0.8
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Cargo	Configurable Space and Cargo	395	—

Crew

Captain, Pilot, Astrogator, Engineers x2, Medic

Hull: 216

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr6622/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr79.46

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems

120

Manoeuvre Drive

120

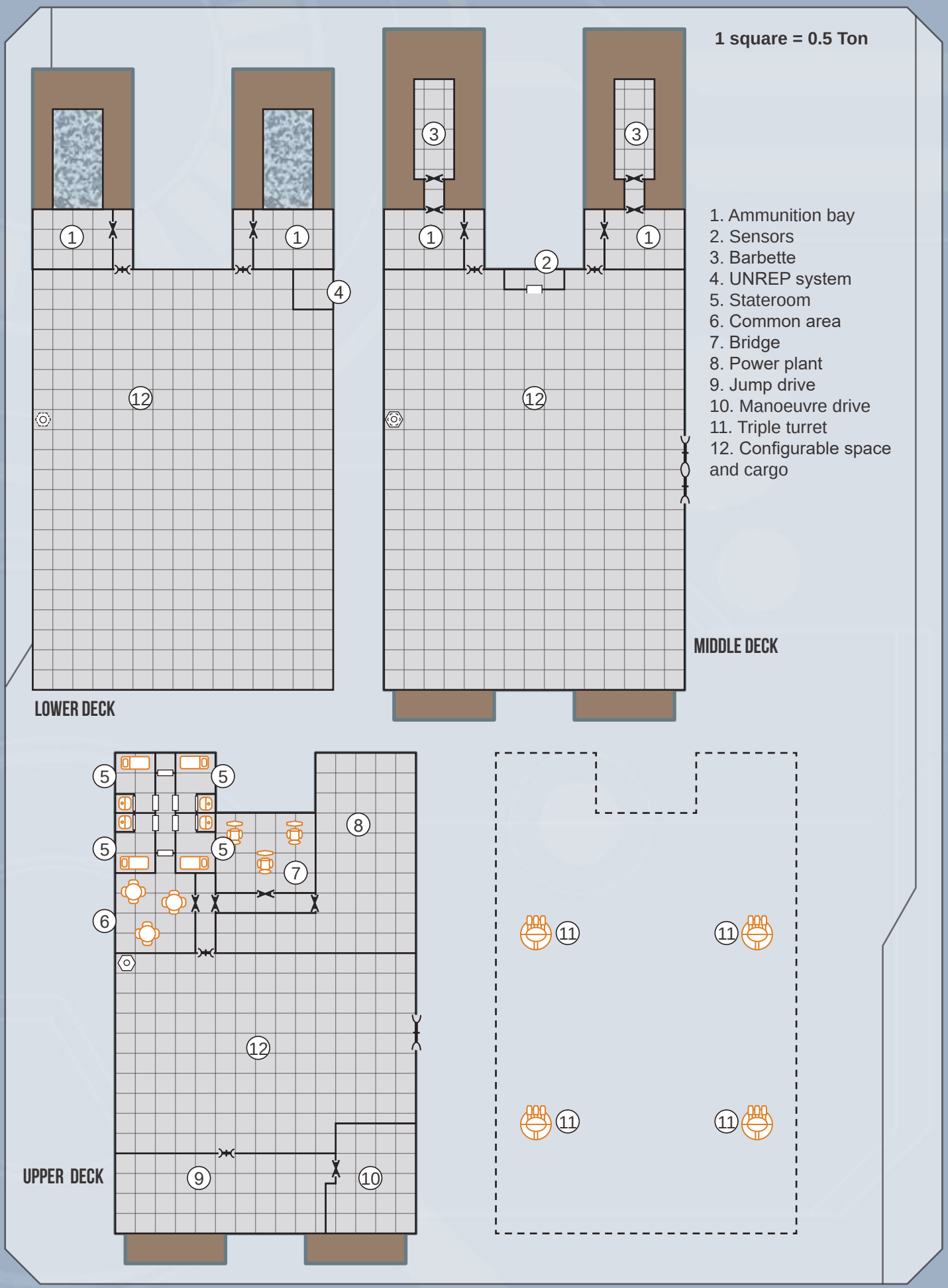
Systems

2

Sensors

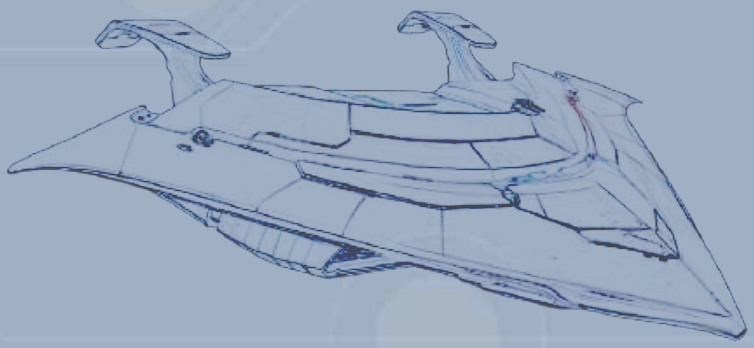
1

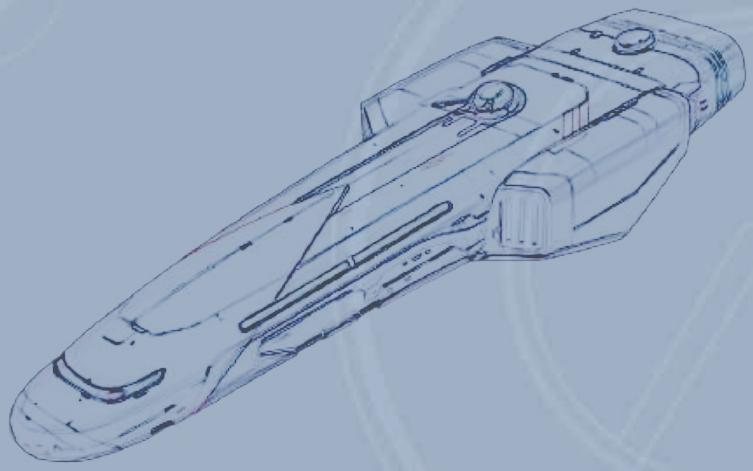
PIRIAMON MULTIROLE VESSEL


1 square = 0.5 Ton
1. Ammunition bay
2. Sensors
3. Barbette
4. UNREP system
5. Stateroom
6. Common area
7. Bridge
8. Power plant
9. Jump drive
10. Manoeuvre drive
11. Triple turret
12. Configurable space and cargo
LOWER DECK
MIDDLE DECK
UPPER DECK

INDEPENDENT STARSHIPS AND CRAFT

A number of designs are built across the region or in non-aligned yards, then sold to whoever wants them. In some cases the original designer is disputed, with several companies claiming ownership or building variants that are just different enough to merit a different class name.





UTILITY VESSEL

CLASS: Meccach

The Meccach-class is considered by many to be a boat rather than a starship, despite it being capable of interstellar travel under its own power. It is intended to serve as a personal transport and courier rather than a commercial ship and is not viable in that role other than when transporting very high-value goods. What the Meccach-class does well is ensure communications are maintained across a three-parsec gap. Transits are not quick, given the vessel's jump-1 capability but with onboard fuel for one jump and optional capacity for two more there are few places these vessels cannot go… eventually.

The lightly armoured hull provides a measure of protection and sublight performance is reasonable for a non-military craft. This, and a light laser armament as standard, makes the Meccach a popular choice for those operating in hazardous areas. Typical users are governments and corporations needing a small, secure courier or merchant lines which prefer to send trade scouts on ahead of their big freighters. In recent years, numbers of these vessels have begun operating out of Emoress. Most are simply couriers but a few, possibly heavily modified, regularly penetrate into K'Kree space and bring back information as well as the occasional defector.

Nominal crew is three; a pilot/astrogator, an engineer and someone capable of operating the weapons when not filling in all the other little jobs that need doing. For longer missions a larger crew of four to six is usually carried, leaving a couple of cabins for passengers or specialist personnel. Common space is fairly generous for such a small ship and the cargo hold or vehicle bay can be repurposed at need. Cargo capacity is officially rated at 12 tons but by using the vehicle bay and configurable areas just over 50 tons can be carried.

TL10		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	150 tons, Streamlined	—	9
Armour	Crystaliron, Armour; 4	9	1.8
M-Drive	Thrust 3	4.5	9
J-Drive	Jump 1	10	15
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 120	12	6
Fuel Tanks	4 Weeks of Operation	2	—
	J-1	15	—
	Fuel/Cargo Containers (capacity 15 tons) x2	31.5	0.15
Bridge		10	1
Computer	Computer/10	0	0.16
Sensors	Military Grade	2	4.1
Weapons	Double Turret (pulse lasers)	1	2.5
Systems	Fuel Processor (20 tons/day)	1	0.05
	Vehicle Bay (Capacity 6 tons)	6.6	0.66
	Fuel Scoops	—	—
Staterooms	Standard x6	24	3
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Jump Control/1	—	0.1
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Common Areas		9	0.9
Cargo		11.9	—

Crew

Captain, Pilot, Astrogator, Engineer, Gunner

Hull: 60

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr4452/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr53.42

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems

30

Manoeuvre Drive

45

Jump Drive

15

Sensors

2

Weapons

9

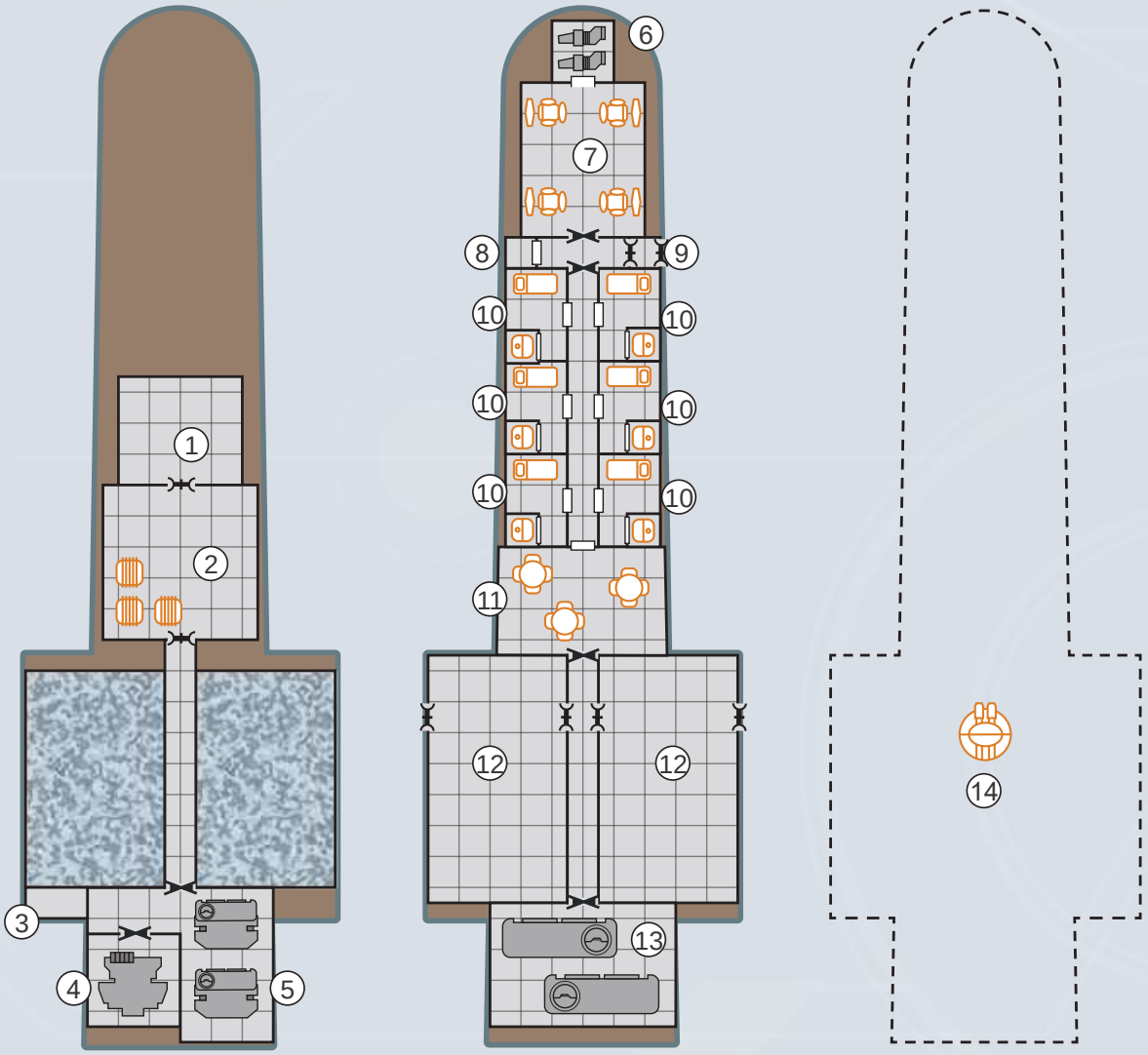
Fuel Processor

1

MECCACH UTILITY VESSEL

1 square = 0.5 Ton

1. Vehicle bay
2. Cargo hold
3. Fuel processor
4. Manoeuvre drive
5. Jump drive
6. Sensors
7. Bridge
8. Fresher
9. airlock
10. stateroom
11. Common area
12. fuel/cargo container
13. Power plant
14. double turret



LOWER DECK

UPPER DECK

SUPERFREIGHTER

CLASS: Beckann

Named for a subsector in Gateway, the Beckann is one of the largest haulage vessels in the region. Ships of this type carry bulk goods between the major starports of the sector, often undertaking cruises lasting many months. The majority run on regular routes but enterprising operators may engage in large-scale speculative trade.

The Beckann is primarily a goods hauler, with over 24,000 tons of cargo space. It has a small mineral processing and manufacturing facility which is sometimes used to produce custom-ordered goods but more commonly churns out standard items likely to be desired at the next port. The manufacturing facility can also create spares for emergency repairs.

The crew live in a sort of 'cabin village' segregated from the passenger-accessible parts of the ship. In addition to those required for the running of the vessel, craft crews and technicians for the factory are usually carried. Large-scale accommodation of this sort is more space-efficient than the staterooms used by passengers, which are only viable on such a large vessel. Although not a passenger vessel, the Beckann class has a decent number of standard cabins and low berths available.

Defences are light but adequate to deter most pirates and some Beckanns carry gunships or fighters to back up their own guns. In-system performance is modest but adequate to trundle in from the jump emergence point and establish orbit. Unless it is possible to dock, cargo transfers are carried out by shuttles. Typically, the hangars are used to load craft which cycle through the process, returning for transport to the next system.

Beckann-class vessels can be encountered across the sector, although they are rarely more than a couple of weeks from a major port. The arrival of one in the backwaters would be an indication that either something very unusual is going on, or a captain has decided to take a risk on a speculative trade cruise. This rarely produces the sort of results necessary to justify tying up such a big vessel but occasionally a staggering profit is made, inspiring others to take a risk in the same manner.

BECKHANN SUPERFREIGHTER

SUPERFREIGHTER

CLASS: Beckann

TL10		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	40,000 tons, Close Structure	—	1600
M-Drive	Thrust 1	400	800
J-Drive	Jump-1	1,005	1507.5
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 18,000	1,800	900
Fuel Tanks	12 Weeks of Operation	540	—
	J-1 x2	8,000	—
Bridge	Standard Bridge	60	200
Computer	Computer/10	—	0.16
Sensors	Civilian Grade	1	3
Weapons	Double Turrets (pulse lasers) x20	20	50
	Point Defence Turret (point defence lasers) x30	15	15
Systems	Armouries x4	4	1
	Brigs x2	8	0.5
	Medical Bays x2	8	4
	Libraries x2	8	8
	Workshops x2	12	1.8
	UNREP System (400 tons/hr)	20	10
	Residential Zone, Medium (capacity 160)	640	64
	Commercial Zone	100	20
	Mineral Refinery (TL10)	100	100
	Advanced Manufacturing Plant (TL10)	100	40
Craft	Full Hangar (capacity 800 tons)	1,600	320
	Docking Space (capacity 1200 tons)	1,320	330
Staterooms	Standard x40	160	20
	Low Berth x120	60	6
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Jump Control 1	—	0.1
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Common Areas		8	0.8
Cargo		24,011	—

Crew

Captain, Pilot, Astrogator, Engineers x60, Maintenance x26, Gunners x33, Administrators x13, Sensops x3, Medic, Officers x7, Manufacturing Crew x50, Refinery Crew x5.

Hull: 20,000

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

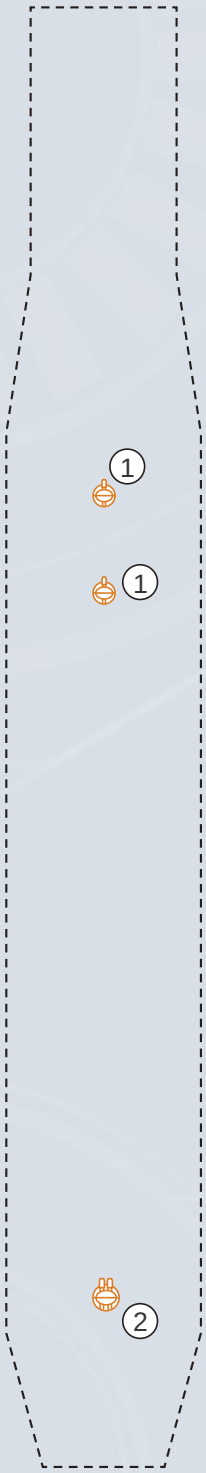
Cr500155/month

PURCHASE COST

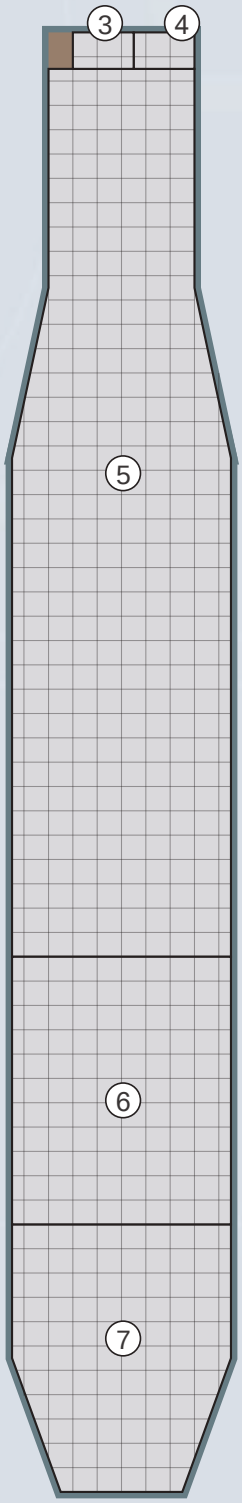
MCr6001.86

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems	8,000
Manoeuvre Drive	4,000
Jump Drive	4,000
Sensors	1
Weapons	240
Systems	487



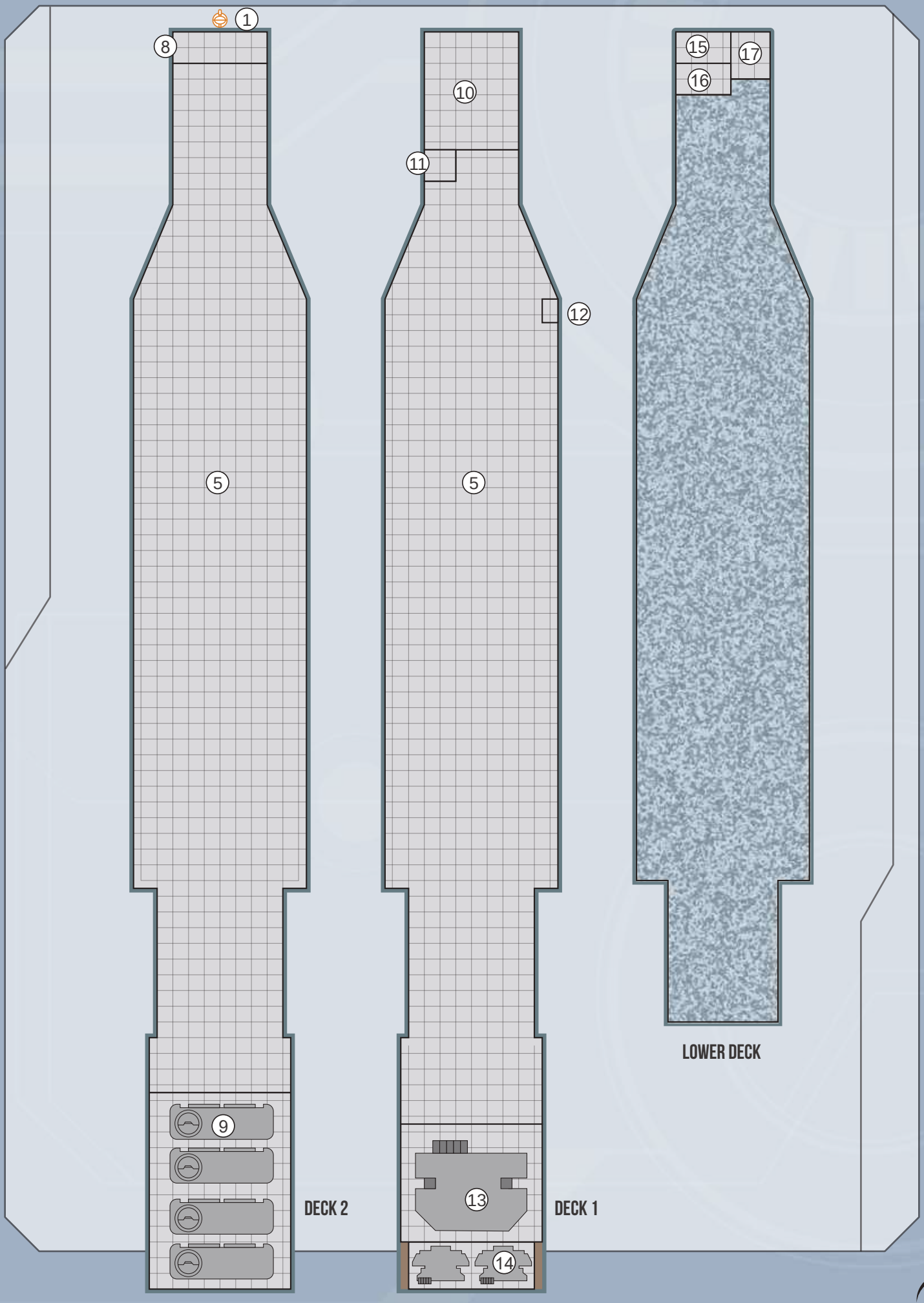
DORSAL SECTION



DECK 3

1 square = 15 Tons

1. Point defence laser cluster
2. Double turret cluster
3. Bridge and sensors
4. Workshops, libraries, medbays, brigs and armouries
5. Cargo area
6. Full hangar
7. Docking space
8. Sataerooms and common area
9. Power plant
10. Residential area
11. Low berths
12. UNREP system
13. Jump drive
14. Manoeuvre drive
15. Commercial zone
16. Mineral refinery
17. Advanced manufacturing plant


1
8
5
9
DECK 2
10
11
12
5
13
14
DECK 1
15
16
17
LOWER DECK

400-TON ORBITAL DEFENCE PLATFORM

CLASS: —

A variety of Orbital Defence Platforms (OPDs) are in use in Gateway, notably in Megusard Corporate and Renkard Union space. They are manufactured to a variety of designs by independent contractors, with significant numbers produced in Megusard yards and delivered to the end client as modules for assembly in orbit. A basic drive is provided for station-keeping and it is customary for orbital forts to shift their orbits in a complex or random pattern to prevent ballistic strikes from eliminating a world's defensive capabilities.

The standard OPD is built as five cylindrical modules joined by a nexus connector. The main body of the station is an elongated cylinder containing the living quarters, with three rings of three docking clamps around the outside. This allows the station to be used as a fighter base or to carry shuttles for customs inspections and the like.

Each clamp can in theory support a craft of up to 100 tons but the available space is such that a craft of 31–60 tons takes up two clamps and a craft of 61–100 tons covers three. An ODP might have six 10-ton fighters and three 20-ton shuttles attached, a 65-ton gunship and six fighters, or some other combination of craft.

The operations and command module is accessed through the nexus connector. This contains the bridge and power-generation chamber, protected by an armoured bulkhead in addition to the station's robust hull, plus a station-keeping drive and defensive laser turret. The nexus connector also gives access to three cylindrical weapons modules, located at 120 degrees around the diameter of the station. These are built around a missile barbette and a magazine for additional munitions, and protected by bulkheads.

TL10		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	400 tons, Dispersed Structure	—	10
Armour	Crystaliron, Armour: 8	80	16
M-Drive	Thrust 0	2	4
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 120	12	6
Fuel Tanks	40 weeks of operation	20	—
Bridge	Standard Bridge	20	2
Computer	Computer/10	—	0.16
Sensors	Military Grade	2	4.1
Weapons	Missile Barbette x3	15	12
	Double Turret (pulse lasers)	1	2.5
Ammunition	Missile Storage (360 missiles)	30	—
Armoured Bulkheads	Missile Barbettes x3, Missile Storage	1.5	0.9
	Power Plant	1.2	0.24
	Bridge	2	0.4
Systems	Docking Clamps (type II) x9	45	9
	UNREP System (100 tons/hour)	5	2.5
	Armoury	1	0.25
Staterooms	Standard x16	64	8
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Common Areas		24	2.4
Cargo		71.3	—

Crew

Captain, Pilot, Engineer, Gunners x8

Hull: 144

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr6704/month

PURCHASE COST

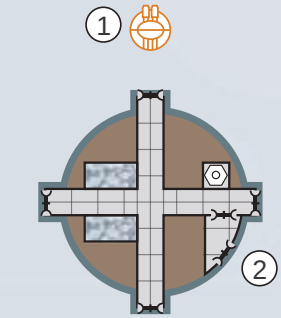
MCr80.45

Power Requirements

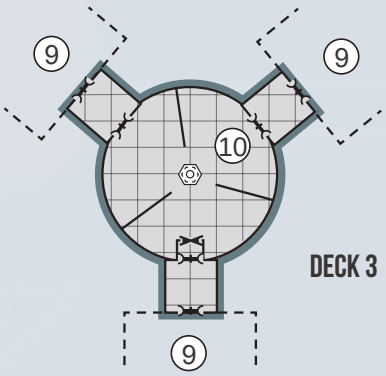
Basic Ship Systems	Manoeuvre Drive	Sensors	Weapons	Systems
80	10	2	9	5

400-TON ORBITAL DEFENCE PLATFORM

1 square = 0.5 Ton

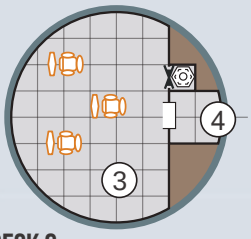


UPPER DECK

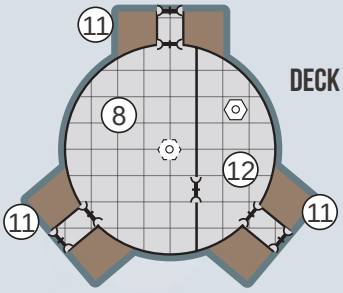


DECK 3

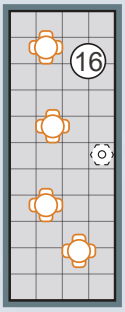
HABITAT 1, 2, 3



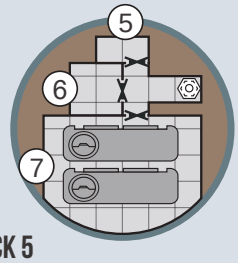
DECK 6



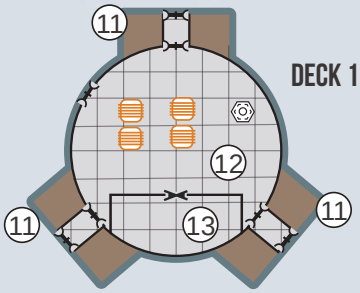
DECK 2



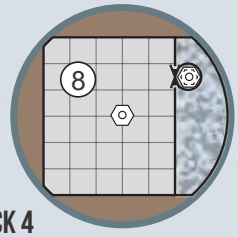
HABITAT 4



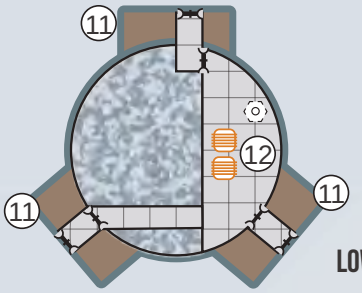
DECK 5



DECK 1



DECK 4



LOWER DECK

1. Double turret
2. Airlock
3. Bridge
4. Sensors
5. Armoury
6. Manoeuvre drive
7. Power plant
8. Missile storage
9. Weapon module
10. Missuile barbettes
11. Docking clamp
12. Cargo hold
13. UNREP system
14. Storage area
15. Staterooms
16. Common area.

GUNSHIP

CLASS: Predator

The Predator-class is a blatantly anti-K'Kree vessel, from armament to name. It is intended to deal with the swarms of robotic fighters used by K'Kree warships using its dogfight missiles and pulse laser turret. Although effective in this, the Predator is not capable of delivering much damage to a large vessel once the swarm is cleared and was designed to operate in concert with other craft mounting anti-ship weapons. Among these is a variant carrying a pair of anti-ship torpedoes on external mounts instead of the dogfight missiles.

The Predator is tough and, for its Tech Level, quite manoeuvrable. It has sufficient space to be converted to other roles, serving as a customs patrol platform or well-protected interface shuttle. Indeed, its most successful engagements have been extracting personnel from a world being overrun by the K'Kree rather than directly challenging their fleets. The Predator is built under license on multiple worlds, using COTS (commercial off-the-shelf) components as much as possible. This makes it easy to maintain and source spares for.

TL10		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	80 tons, Streamlined	—	4.8
Armour	Crystaliron, Armour; 10	24	4.8
M-Drive	Thrust 3	2.4	4.8
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 50	5	2.5
Fuel Tanks	4 weeks of operation	1	—
Bridge	Small	3	0.25
Computer	Computer/10	—	0.16
Sensors	Military Grade	2	4.1
Weapons	Single Turret (pulse laser)	1	1.2
	Launch Rails (TL10 Dogfight Missiles) x2	0.2	0.05
Ammunition	Missile Storage (360 missiles)	30	—
Armoured Bulkheads	Bridge	0.3	0.06
	Powerplant, Drive	0.74	0.148
Systems		—	—
Staterooms	Cabin Space (2 passengers)	3	0.15
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Common Areas		—	—
Cargo		7.36	—

Crew

Pilot, Gunner

Hull: 32

Running Costs

MAINTENANCE COST

Cr1918/month

PURCHASE COST

MCr23.018

Power Requirements

Basic Ship Systems

16

Manoeuvre Drive

24

Sensors

2

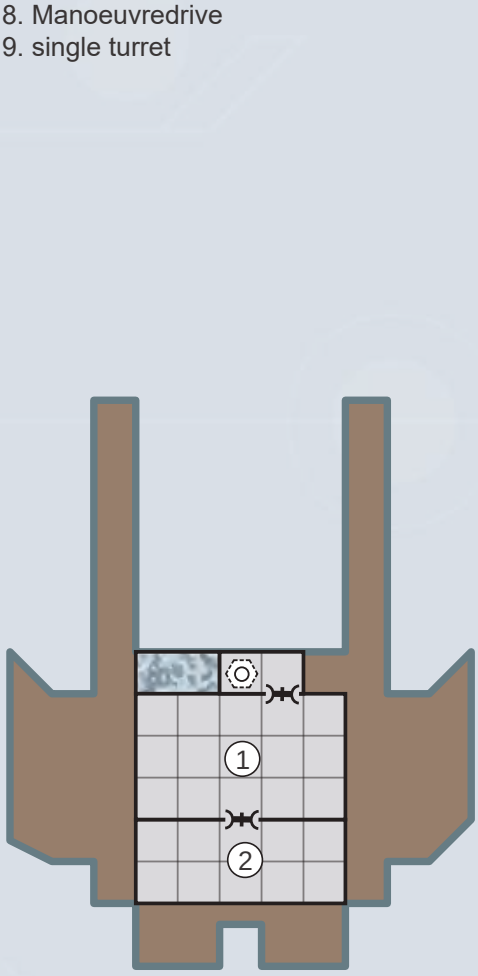
Weapons

4

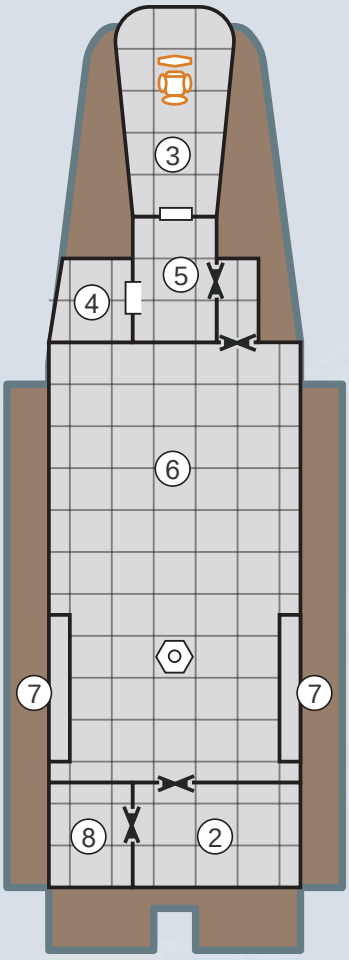
PREDATOR GUNSHIP

1 square = 0.5 Ton

1. Cargo hold
2. Power plant
3. Cockpit
4. Sensors
5. Cabin space
6. Missile storage
7. launch rail
8. Manoeuvredrive
9. single turret



LOWER DECK



UPPER DECK

COVERT OPERATIONS PLATFORM

CLASS: Teccmir

The Teccmir-class was designed as a reconnaissance platform and as such has some unusual features. One is the oversized bridge, which has sufficient space for additional crewmembers. These are normally engaged in real-time analysis of data when the vessel is in a dangerous are, and longer-term in-depth intelligence work for the remainder of the time. Communications interception capability is limited but against targets of a similar Tech Level, the Teccmir-class can conduct effective signals intelligence work.

Electronic warfare is only a small part of this vessel's work. It is designed to covertly land personnel and equipment on-planet and retrieve them once the mission is complete. The spacious briefing suite and some of the cargo area can be converted to additional accommodation if necessary. This is the case with vessels supporting the secret wars against the Lords of Thunder on various worlds.

If detected, the Teccmir is capable of defending against small-craft but it is not a warship. Nor is it commercially viable; almost a third of its tonnage is taken up with fuel tanks. This permits a secondary role as a courier or personnel transport, or even as the command vessel for a small-ship task force. Depending on the intended role the briefing rooms, vehicle bay and drone launchers can be removed and replaced with other systems. It is known a few Teccmir are used as prisoner transports for extremely sensitive offenders, whilst others operate on covert prisoner-snatch missions to obtain personnel for interrogation.

TL10		Tons	Cost (MCr)
Hull	300 tons, Streamlined	—	18
	Stealth (improved)	—	30
Armour	Crystaliron, Armour; 2	9	1.8
M-Drive	Thrust 3	9	18
J-Drive	Jump-1	12.5	18.75
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 210	21	10.5
Fuel Tanks	8 weeks of operation	6	—
	J-1 x3	90	—
Bridge		20	1.5
Computer	Computer/10	—	0.16
Sensors	Military Grade	2	4.1
Weapons	Double Turret (pulse lasers)	1	2.5
	Point-Defence turrets (PD lasers) x2	1	1.5
Systems	Armouries x2	2	0.5
	Briefing Rooms x2	8	1
	Brig	4	0.25
	Medical Bay	4	2
	Probe Drones (20 drones)	4	2
	Vehicle Bay (capacity 20 tons)	22	2.2
Staterooms	Standard x8	32	4
Software	Manoeuvre	—	—
	Jump Control 1	—	0.1
	Library	—	—
	Intellect	—	—
Common Areas		8	0.8
Cargo		44.5	—

Crew

Captain, Pilot, Astrogator, Engineers x2
Gunners x2, Medic

Hull: 120

Running Costs

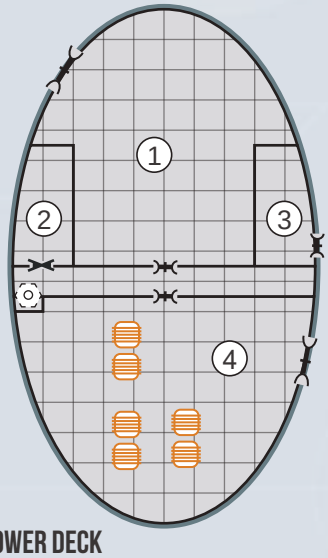
MAINTENANCE COST
Cr9972/month
PURCHASE COST
MCr119.66

Power Requirements

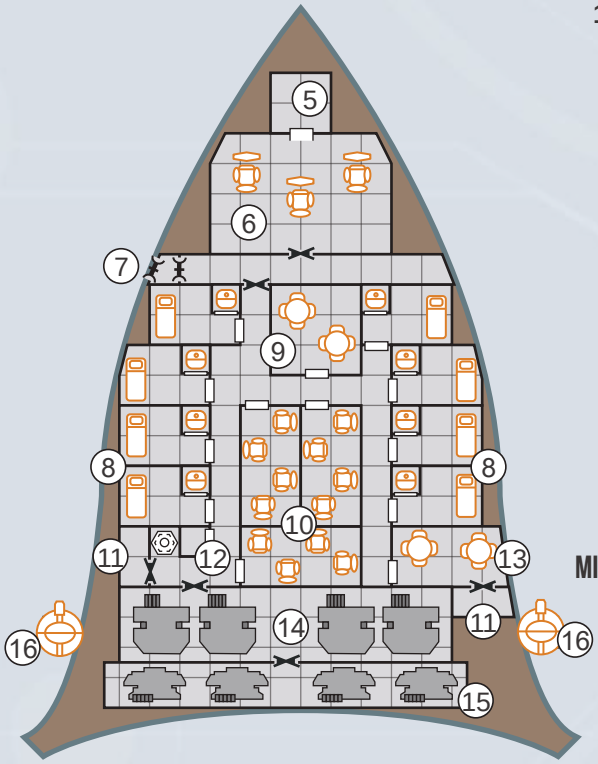
Basic Ship Systems	60
Manoeuvre Drive	90
Jump Drive	30
Sensors	2
Weapons	13
Systems	1

TECCMIR COVERT OPS PLATFORM

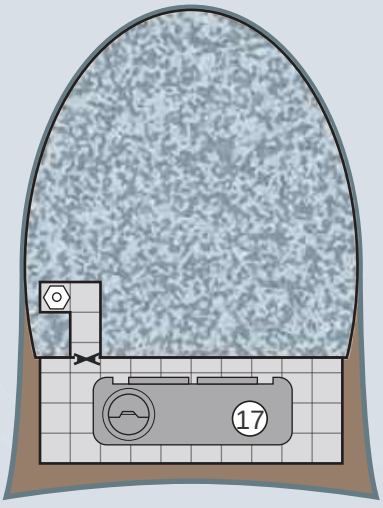
1 square = 0.5 Ton



LOWER DECK



MIDDLE DECK



UPPER DECK

1. Vehicle bay
2. Brig
3. Drones
4. Cargo hold
5. Sensors
6. Bridge
7. Airlock
8. staterooms
9. Common area
10. briefing room
11. Armoury
12. fresher
13. common area
14. Jump drive
15. Manoeuvre drive
16. Point defence turret
17. Power plant
18. Pulse lasers (dorsal)

ADVENTURES IN THE TRAILING FRONTIER

The Trailing Frontier offers a wide range of adventuring possibilities. Ley is mostly Imperial space, so adventures there might be driven by internal politics and economic factors. Over the border are many small powers, some of which are at odds with one another, and areas that have been little explored by Imperial citizens. There is no reason to assume the data held in Imperial libraries is entirely correct and it is certainly not complete. There is room for almost any sort of adventure in this setting and a campaign might incorporate several of the elements mentioned below.

ALIENS AND ANCIENTS

There are several major and minor alien races in the Trailing Frontier. Indeed, some humans of the region are more alien than the non-humans. An encounter with a very alien species can be a frustrating or rewarding experience; it is certainly the stuff of high adventure. As with human cultures, alien society should possess internal consistency but this need not be immediately obvious to Travellers. Aliens are every bit as varied and complex in their motivations as humans and should be presented accordingly.

The Traveller universe has its share of vanished alien and human societies. Some are quite ancient, and have left behind only mysterious ruins and artefacts, whilst others have obviously disappeared quite recently – at least, in historical terms. However, the greatest of all alien mysteries is presented by the Ancients, who it is thought are the beings who genetically engineered humans and Vargr, and transplanted them across Charted Space for reasons unknown. The Ancients have now vanished but some remnants of their civilisation survive. It is thought they destroyed themselves in a huge civil war long ago; what is left are minor outposts too unimportant to be targeted.

Ancient artifacts are enormously valuable (those that work, anyway) and often dangerous. Ancients researchers and artifact hunters scour Charted Space for remnants of their lost technology. Those that possess working Ancient devices are reluctant to allow anyone to see them. It is unlikely the Ancients will play much part in a campaign in the Trailing Frontier but they are normally blamed for every strange anomaly, ruin or mystery discovered. Sometimes these assumptions are correct, and it is possible Travellers will occasionally encounter remnants of these powerful beings, or be propelled into an adventure by the rumour of an Ancients site.

There are indications the Ancients were active in the Trailing Frontier but not extensively so. They are known to have seeded the Luriani and Sydites on their respective homeworlds but no major Ancients sites have ever been discovered in the region. There are always those who are adamant they exist and Ancients hunters can be found almost anywhere. There are also those who seek to profit from a false rumour of an Ancients find, either selling fake artefacts or making money from the rubes who come rushing to seek their fortune.

There is some evidence the Ancients seeded worlds with humans and other creatures, who either survived long enough to be incorporated into the new colonies set up by the Ramshackle Empire or vanished long before the First Imperium arose. At least one world has structures which seem to date from the Ancients period and there are populations of creatures and people not native to their ‘home’ worlds. It is possible the Ancients planted these and they may have altered some star systems by deflecting moons or destroying planets. Searching for traces of the Ancients in Gateway could be the focus of an entire campaign, made more complex by the existence of rival local powers.

INTERSTELLAR TRADE AND COMMERCE

A campaign focusing on interstellar trade and commerce could take several forms. The typical free trader campaign is always an option but with an extra dimension provided by the existence of numerous powers. Free Traders could be engaged by the navy to gather intelligence or by a major shipping corporation to act as trade scouts. Indeed, a corporate trade-scout mission would be a good way to get the Travellers moving from world-to-world in the Trailing Frontier even if their adventures are not always connected with commerce.

It might also be interesting to run a high-level commercial campaign. The Travellers might be corporate executives with a set budget or assigned assets, tasked with opening up trade opportunities in a new area. In

addition to managing their resources and finding ways to make money they would inevitably be drawn into local politics. Such a campaign might be connected with the Gateway Sector Project, or with a covert plan to harden local systems by aligning them with the Imperium and providing the funds to create effective defences.

Such a campaign would see the Travellers operating in an area where they normally do not. Rather than looking for low-bulk, high-value, one-off cargo runs they would be operating on a smaller margin but using larger ships carrying vastly more. Bulky items such as ore and grain are normally moved in enormous bulk freighters, usually operated by a world government or a large merchant line. Such vessels are often chartered or contracted to a route for long periods of time. Service aboard such a vessel tends to be routine and rather dull for the most part but the pay is good and the risks low. This might not interest the Travellers very much but the situation might be different if they were the ship's operators.

SMUGGLING, PIRACY AND COMMERCIAL WARFARE

Smuggling is likely to occur anywhere there is trade. The temptation to under-declare cargoes or slip a few small packages through customs concealed in a special mini-hold is considerable. Customs parties do board vessels and search for contraband but the thoroughness of such searches varies considerably. This kind of minor smuggling is a fairly trivial problem for most interstellar states. More serious is the practice of shipping illegal goods into a world disguised as something legal there. Quite large cargoes can be brought in by this method, although it is generally easier for customs personnel to spot something is amiss.

In many cases, smugglers of this sort will purchase goods on one world, where they are quite legal, along with a cover cargo they can make a small profit on at the destination, and openly fly into port with their ostensibly legal cargo. If they can deceive customs into inspecting only the cover cargo, they can then deliver the illicit goods. An alternative on this strategy is to use an unsuspecting merchant crew to do the smuggling, by contracting them to deliver legal cargo but concealing something illicit in the containers. This is one reason smart crews check out their own cargoes and take care from whom they accept contracts. Of course, a ship with financial problems may have to take whatever is going.

The most blatant form of smuggling is undertaken by bold crews who try to evade detection and slip onto a world away from the starport, never allowing customs personnel anywhere near the cargo. Such vessels can arrive with a hold blatantly filled with illicit goodies, although most have some form of deception or concealment plan in case they are caught by a customs ship. There is a fine line between this sort of smuggling and blockade running, where a vessel attempts to penetrate an interdiction squadron to deliver goods or personnel to a world surface.

A campaign revolving around commercial activity could cross the line into smuggling and a naval campaign might see the Travellers trying to stop it. There is also the possibility the Travellers might end up smuggling weapons into worlds threatened by the Lords of Thunder, or trying to get people out of a system about to be overrun. They might also find themselves harassing K'Kree shipping as a form of commercial warfare or dealing with K'Kree-sponsored pirates, as well as more typical plunder-for-profit vessels.

Piracy is more common in independent systems such as most of Gateway than in a large state like the Imperium. This is for several reasons but mainly because a major state can afford more resources to protect commerce and hunt pirates. It is necessary for pirates to have a base of some kind and a large state will normally act to correct any world acting as a pirate haven, or to sweep a system suspected of having a base on its outsystem planets.

There are exceptions, of course. Pirate organisations may exert considerable influence and even more or less control a world's government. In some cases, corporations or even states have been founded on pirate money – and to the Vargr, corsair is an honourable profession with long traditions. As a rule, however, piracy is uncommon in the Imperium and the more powerful states of Gateway, except near the borders. In non-aligned space, it is somewhat more common.

There are several kinds of pirate. The first is the 'ethically challenged merchant', or ECM. Out on the frontiers, merchant ships are often armed for self-protection. Such vessels are able to undertake aggressive action as well as defensive. The ECM-type pirate is a merchant vessel that supplements its income by opportunistic piracy. Such craft will attack only when the odds are heavily in their favour. The typical ECM pirate starts out honest but slips into smuggling as profits from trade drop. As things get worse, a golden opportunity drops in their lap, and the crew crosses the line in a single act of piracy. Successful or not, this is the watershed; having become predators, most crews continue their piratical career intermittently until caught or killed.

The career pirate is rather rarer and such careers are often cut short by the navy. Career pirates may operate merchant ships, and indeed engage in normal commerce or smuggling, but they are always on the lookout for a mark. Smart pirates – the ones that last more than a few weeks – choose their targets carefully and often use deception to get into a position of overwhelming superiority. Contrary to the popular image, most career pirates are non-descript captains of well but not excessively armed merchant ships.

Career pirates make use of a number of factors to ensure their success. They often bribe or influence port workers and officials to feed them information, as well as taking note of where the navy patrols and where merchant ships are most vulnerable. Some strike and move on; others have places to hide or fade back into the merchant traffic and bluff their way past the antipiracy patrols. All smart pirates ensure their attacks are dispersed in time and space, and are willing to abort an attack at any point and slip away if the odds are poor.

There are a few swashbuckling buccaneers operating in the region. Most have a very short career since they are so blatant that they lose the anonymity of more cautious pirates. Those who are successful usually operate heavily modified vessels, or even semi-military ships, giving them a fighting chance against a patrol vessel or at least enough acceleration to run away and enter jump.

Many such buccaneers deliberately cultivate a reputation to help their activities. The usual stereotype is the harsh but fair pirate captain who will strip a ship bare if it surrenders but leave passengers and crew who do not resist unharmed. Such captains will go to great lengths to keep their reputation intact and normally blast ships to pieces if they fight, creating a choice between safe but financially harmful surrender and certain death. So long as the reputation remains intact, such a technique can work.

Larger pirate organisations do exist. Sometimes several ships band together to create a base or to go after more valuable prey. Such organisations often use varied methods – some of them legal – to remain viable, engaging in commerce, smuggling, cargo theft directly from starports and extortion as well as traditional piracy. Many pirate outfits work both sides of the line and will demand protection money not to attack or even hire out as escorts-for-hire if this seems more profitable than attacking commerce, or if it serves some other end.

Pirates normally steal cargo rather than the carrying ship. There are numerous reasons for this. A ship that has resisted and been disabled may not be in a jump-worthy condition and only be fit to be stripped for spares. Bringing in such a ship requires a prize crew or placing some troops aboard to coerce the crew into taking it to the pirates' safe port. The crew normally have nothing to lose, since they are likely to be killed to prevent them from revealing the location of the pirate base, so coercion is not always successful.

However, pirates do sometimes hijack ships or capture them to break for spares or sell on the black market. Pirate groups will seek the best profit they can get, wherever it comes from. Some pirate groups also engage in planetary raiding, normally against outposts and worlds unable to adequately defend themselves. Such ships carry a contingent of ground troops and support vehicles. They strike hard, grab what they can and depart swiftly.

Similar to piracy is commerce raiding, or commercial warfare. This is conducted by warships or armed private vessels and while cargoes may be taken, the goal is to harass or destroy enemy shipping and inflict economic damage. Privateering is illegal in the Imperium but commerce raiding by legitimate warships is considered a part of war-fighting and accepted as such. Commerce raiders tend to be light military ships, well enough armed to destroy merchants and their small escorts but fast enough to escape powerful navy ships.

To counter the threat of piracy and commerce raiding, many merchant ships are armed and in dangerous areas frontier trader type ships are popular. These are hardened merchants that sacrifice some of their cargo space for extra weapons and sensors, or military fire control systems. Such craft also make decent raiders.

Other measures include random and regular naval patrols, inspections of suspicious vessels, sweeps of areas likely to be used as a base and occasionally Q-ships; heavily armed vessels disguised as innocent and vulnerable trade ships. These measures are deterrents for the most part and only rarely make contact with a pirate ship. By making piracy difficult or excessively hazardous, these measures cause the pirates to move on. However, coverage is expensive, so the level of patrols and other operations is often reduced after the number of pirate attacks diminishes. In time, the pirates come back.

Actually eradicating piracy is a matter for careful intelligence work. Agents find the pirate bases, their supporters and safe ports, their hardware suppliers and the people who buy the pirates' stolen wares. Then the enforcement arm (which could be special police, army or navy ground troops) strikes fast and hard. Arrests are made where possible, or in some cases the navy will simply blast an outsystem base

to slag. Facing the death penalty, many pirates resist vigorously, so anti-piracy strikes can approach the conditions of an all-out battle.

CONFLICT AND INTERSTELLAR WARFARE

Within Imperial territory, conflict is limited by laws. Transgressors risk being corrected by force and cannot possibly hope to defeat the Imperial armed forces. Most conflicts are kept within civilised limits and are typically characterised by precision operations or low-intensity skirmishing. Beyond the Imperial border the situation is rather different. Low-intensity warfare is always possible, especially where funding and resources are limited. At the other end of the scale, Travellers could be drawn into a major war between two of the region's powers or against the Lords of Thunder. The amount of restraint shown in such cases depends on many factors and escalation is always a possibility.

All-out war between worlds is fortunately very rare. Such wars are mainly naval affairs, since whoever gains uncontested control of orbital space can bombard the defender into oblivion at leisure. Most states are unwilling to do so, however, for several reasons. Not only is massive orbital bombardment with nuclear weapons or deadfall ordnance – generally referred to as 'rocks' whatever its actual nature – devastating to the ecology of the target world, often slaughtering the entire population and rendering the planet useless into the bargain, but this kind of apocalyptic attack is repugnant to most civilised states.

Additionally, there is the fact that a state or world which engages in this kind of warfare – or uses biological weaponry to cause mass casualties – is likely to alarm its neighbours, who may band together and make sure it never happens to them. An apocalyptic state may find itself on the receiving end of a massed attack designed to do unto them before they can do unto others. As a result, wars tend to be subject to a certain amount of restraint, negotiation and brinkmanship. These limited wars always run the risk of escalation but civilian targets are normally considered off-limits except where they are used to shelter military assets – and sometimes even then.

Most wars take the form of skirmishes in space or ground actions to seize outposts and economic targets, with both sides trying to inflict economic damage and bring the opposition to the negotiating table on favourable terms. Massed fleet actions are rare, because losing one can lose the war, and the sheer cost of rebuilding even a victorious fleet can ruin a planetary economy.

Covert actions, raids and similar small-scale military operations are common, sometimes coupled with support for dissident elements in the enemy's society. Sudden attacks by ground forces to seize important targets are occasionally attempted. These are usually followed by a demand for negotiations, which normally results in a peace treaty, some concessions etc. Invasion to occupy and annex a world is only possible where one side has a massive military superiority.

Most interstellar wars are characterised by an attitude of 'grab what you can and sue for peace' and are fought for limited goals under restrictive rules of engagement. The occasional war that spills out beyond this restriction is remembered as a horrific business for generations to come. Normally rival states have more to gain from a favourable treaty and some economic or territorial concessions than obliteration of a neighbour, even if it means a rematch 10 years down the line.

Wars of survival and extermination, such as the one that some analysts believe will eventually occur between the K'Kree and the Imperium, are not subject to any rules or restrictions. Such a war may have caused the destruction of the Ancients and their civilisation. Nobody wants to risk such a fate, unless they are sure they can win or are backed into a corner from which there is no escape. Most combatants are careful to ensure their enemies never become so desperate and wars remain a mix of economic, diplomatic and military action seeking advantage rather than apocalypse.

Travellers might become involved in conflict as participants – perhaps mercenaries or the crew of a long-range naval expedition – or be caught up in wider events. An interesting take on the naval campaign might be to have the Travellers fighting against Imperial expansion into Gateway. The Imperial Navy has enormous resources but is at the end of a long supply line, making a successful campaign by a resourceful but overmatched enemy a possibility.

Tensions between the states of Gateway Domain offer many opportunities for mercenary work but of course the nightmare scenario is defending a world against an invasion by the Lords of Thunder. If this were part of an all-out steamroller attempt the Travellers would stand no chance but it is common for one or another of the K'Kree leaders to act alone with limited resources. A successful defence or escape after a hard fight leading to a narrow defeat is possible. It may even be that the Travellers could bring down one of the great leaders of the Lords of Thunder. One who feels threatened by rivals might launch a military campaign to demonstrate strength, only to fail and be eliminated. Such an event would place the Travellers on the stage of history even if they never directly encountered their enemy.

THE PSIONICS INSTITUTES

The term psionics institutes is a general catch-all for the various groups and individuals that teach the use of mind powers. Some are real institutes, organised as a university or even a corporate training school. Others are hidden, meeting like a witches' coven to practice and share knowledge, and some are individual adepts and masters who take on the odd student from time-to-time.

The institutes have no agenda or common cause. Most are discreet – especially in the Imperium, where psionics are banned – and like to maintain anonymity. A few are in communication or aware of one another but for the most part each is an independent entity. Their only common trait is a desire to be left alone to pursue their interests. This individualism means the institutes are not a coherent force but does not mean they do not influence events in the region. Some psions actively use their powers to influence politics while others serve as advisors, often disguising the nature of their power by acting as intelligence coordinators or political advisors.

It is not uncommon for psions to wander, seeking new secrets or basic training. Some such wanderers may get involved in local events – for good or bad reasons – because they have the power to influence matters or because their talent reveals something others might not see. Such a wandering apprentice or adept psion can do great good or harm (usually a bit of both) by their actions.

Occasionally a psion will decide to go on a crusade to right some wrong or change the world for the better, to champion justice or to make a fortune from a life of psionic crime. Such individuals draw attention – normally of an unfavourable sort – to the institutes, and are frowned upon at best. Sometimes it is necessary for an institute to take measures to dispose of a crusading psion, even one who is doing good, to avoid backlash from the local populace.

The world of psionics is not merely a wondrous vista of glorious mental learning; it is a shadowy environment of conflict, politics, rivalry and occasional violence. The Travellers might find themselves drawn into such a conflict, which may have no clear villains and no heroes at all. Psionics might play a part in almost any Traveller game set in the Trailing Frontier, particularly one that touches on the Ancients in some way.

IMPERIAL ENTANGLEMENTS IN GATEWAY

The Gateway Project is the most widely known of the Imperial endeavours in Gateway and certainly the largest. It is an umbrella for multiple smaller projects, loosely coordinated through the Domain capital at Annapabar. Those with the funding and equipment for the task they have in mind can apply for membership of the project, which carries relatively minor benefits. An officially sanctioned project will be given preference in any dispute with a private venture and the Project facilitates mutual assistance and cooperation. For those without the wherewithal to carry out their plans, the Project has funding for worthy endeavours and can help source personnel and equipment.

Membership of the Gateway Project is not mandatory to obtain a license to operate across the border, but it does help. The archduke likes to keep an eye on what is going on and to be able to direct endeavours towards the goals of the Imperium as a whole. Joining the Project means buying into this mindset and the archduke rewards those who align themselves in this manner. However, there are many smaller and private ventures operating without the oversight of the Project. Imperial ships and personnel can still rely on the protection of the Navy and the diplomatic service if they get into trouble whilst undertaking legitimate business.

Whilst this activity is legal and above-board, there are plenty of Imperial citizens operating below the radar or pursuing their own agendas. Cross-border smuggling is common, usually carried out on a small scale by otherwise legitimate vessels. Blockade runners –

dedicated smuggling vessels which operate covertly rather than making a pretence of being legal – also cross in and out of Imperial space. These are the likely means for larger cargoes. Since the Imperium has a generally higher Tech Level than the worlds outside its borders, high-tech cargoes are lucrative, especially restricted goods.

A number of the ports in The Gate are smuggler-friendly. This does attract Imperial displeasure and the occasional raid but it is not possible to suppress the problem entirely. There are also rumoured to be secret freeports located in certain systems, supporting a more organised smuggling trade. The otherwise legitimate corporations involved in cross-border trade may also be illegally moving high-tech goods.

In addition to the corporate and illicit trade, there are other Imperial ventures in Gateway Domain. Some of the nobles who lost their holdings in the reshuffle following the installation of the new archduke have quietly begin moving assets and personnel beyond the border. Even quite a minor Imperial noble house could be a player in the politics of Gateway, especially if they possessed high-tech weaponry or starships. A number of these pocket empires have been identified. Most seem harmless in the grand scheme of things but it is possible that some might dream of returning to Ley to overthrow its current leaders. Such a venture is unlikely to succeed but that does not rule out an attempt.

FORMER ARCHDUKE STEPHEN AND THE LOYAL SECTOR GUARD

Deposing an archduke is not done lightly – except in Ley, or so the saying goes. The Erechs dynasty had three generations on the archducal throne at Annapabar; long enough to make their mark on the sector. They are primarily remembered for instigating a time of turbulence, although this was probably better for the ordinary folk than the stagnant cronyism of Nells and his followers. Archduke Stephen lost his primary title but was given the barony of Zuge as an appanage. His other titles were redistributed along with that of the archduke, removing him from direct positions of power around the domain capital.

No high noble would be pleased at a huge demotion of this sort but the requirement is to accept the situation gracefully. Usually the bitter pill is sugared a little by appointment to a new set of duties which carry additional prestige. This was the case with former Archduke Stephen, whose appointment as baron of Zuge placed him on the Imperial border. The post came with great wealth in the form of shares in various Imperial businesses. These were diversified, so Baron Stephen did not gain influence over these companies but he was granted an income far greater than a typical baron. This of course came with conditions. The baron of Zuge is a 'Defender of The Gate', charged with maintaining personal forces sufficient to contribute to the stability and protection of this sensitive region.

In the three decades since his deposition as archduke, Baron Stephen has fulfilled the role of Defender of The Gate diligently and well. Of course he resents his demotion and plans to elevate himself or his family, and there are several possible routes he might take. One is loyal service in his new role, perhaps coupled with some polite criticism of the new order. The baron has no choice but to fulfil this role – he would be further demoted and disgraced if he did not – but he has made a point of doing the job better than anyone could have expected.

Baron Stephen's personal forces – known as huscarles – are scarcely smaller than when he held the office of archduke. They include escort-class warships and support vessels repurposed from the merchant line Stephen still owns. It is not uncommon to see these vessels in Outworld subsector or to find detachments of the baron's huscarles protecting friendly installations in the region. They are often encountered in company with Loyal Sector Guard personnel and many officers are members of both organisations.

The LSG presence on Zuge is typical of the organisation; a fairly large number of members who do nothing much besides drink expensive wine and look dashing in their uniforms. However, a higher than average percentage of the LSG's Zuge chapter go active by joining the Gateway Legion or in detachments sent into Gateway. Ironically perhaps, given that the original Loyal Sector Guard supported the deposed Nells against the new Archduke Erechs, Baron Stephen is a prominent and influential member of the organisation.

There are concerns Baron Stephen may be building a powerbase within Imperial territory through his LSG affiliations and creating a force of combat-experienced soldiers with the Gateway Legion. To what purpose remains unknown; it is entirely possible he is loyally pushing the Imperial agenda in Gateway. However, it is known that cargoes of manufacturing equipment and life-support systems have been shipped across the border. Baron Stephen may have decided to set up a base somewhere beyond the reach of the current archduke, who cannot take away what he cannot find. Whether this is a fallback position in case a future gambit fails or serves some other purpose remains to be seen.

MYSTERIES OF THE TRAILING FRONTIER

There are many mysteries, great and small, in the Trailing Frontier. These might be the focus of a campaign or something the Travellers stumble on in the middle of doing something else. A hard-bitten force of mercenaries skirmishing with scouts from the Lords of Thunder might find themselves dealing with something entirely different and may not realise it at first.

One of the largest mysteries of the Trailing Frontier is the Wandering People. They are widely thought to have entered the region a few hundred years ago but are in fact a native species. There is a persistent but incorrect myth that they invented the jump drive and at one time knew the secret of advanced drives well ahead of their time. Might the Wanderers be a Major Race? Might their lost knowledge unlock the secrets of jump-7 or higher? The answer to both questions is no, but investigating the Wanderers will lead to revelations about the Vilani Imperium.

Many of the facts known about the Wandering People are incorrect. The commonly available databases typically mention only their worldships and a few physical characteristics. Those with more information claim they invented a superior jump drive, which frightened the Vilani imperium so much that the Wanderers' homeworld was destroyed. The latter part of this statement is true but the Wanderers did not invent the jump drive and are not a Major Race. Nevertheless, the occasional datanet article thunders out new revelations about the Wandering People and trots out the old myth that they had jump-2 and higher before the Vilani. This is not what happened. Nor is the commonly held belief that they crossed the Lesser Rift correct. Some may have done so but most of the Wanderers' worldships went in other directions.

The Wanderers emerged as a sentient species on the world of Lirguu in what is now Diamond-Prince subsector in the distant past. For millennia they developed their culture and technology, until eventually they ventured into space. The original exploration ships were sublight vessels much like the current worldships, although on a much less grand scale.

Sometime before -5400, the Vilani were experimenting with a wholly new concept – a jump drive that could propel a ship more than the one parsec thought to be its limit. Early experimentation was risky to say the least, and testbed ships sometimes misjumped. One hurled itself all the way to the rimward-trailing corner of Ley where the wreck was found by the curious Wanderers. They were able to reverse-engineer the drive, although in an inferior form, and ultimately launched their first jump-capable vessels.

Sublight exploration was quickly displaced by jump technology, although the Wanderers used the technique of jumping to a sublight base ship sent out decades earlier and using it as a mobile base from which to explore the local region. By this means the Wanderers spread out across several systems, where they created a stable and peaceful civilisation. They also contacted other species, including the Luriani, and traded knowledge, including that of the jump drive, to them. When the Vilani realised the Luriani had jump technology, they were alarmed that another species could have developed it. It was not until later they discovered it was their own drives, albeit modified by Wanderer influences, and by then the Vilani Imperium had visited catastrophe on the Wanderers.

Around –5400, contact with the Vilani shattered the Wanderers' peaceful existence. The Ziru Sirka had recently developed a reliable jump-2 drive which gave them huge advantages over those whose strategic mobility was limited to one parsec a week. All the same, the possession of jump by the Luriani was a shock. When a Wanderer drive was examined, shock turned to terror. The Vilani realised – incorrectly – that the Wanderers had cracked one of the major technological barriers of the jump drive and could in theory build two- or even three-parsec capable ships.

This was bad enough but the internal politics of the Vilani Imperium also played a part. Ambitious officials overstated the threat and asked for funding to counter it. By the time the report reached the shadow emperor, the Wanderers had functional jump-5 vessels. This made them capable of striking deep into the Vilani Imperium and strategically outmanoeuvring the empire's battle fleets, which could not be permitted. The Vilani demanded the secret of high-jump drives from the bemused Wanderers and when they did not deliver them – because they could not – the shadow emperor ordered the secret be taken by force.

The ambitious officials who had inflated the threat never got their increased budget. Instead a fleet of the most powerful jump-2 ships the Ziru Sirka could muster was diverted from a campaign elsewhere and sent into what is now Ley. This weakened the campaign against a species known as the Kaski, in Empty Quarter sector, and contributed to Vilani difficulties there. War with the Wanderers might have been averted but the

Vilani commanders were nervous. A minor incident escalated and within days an entire Wanderer colony had been turned to slag with nuclear warheads. There was no turning back now. The high-jump threat of the Wanderers, imaginary as it turned out to be, had to be eliminated at any cost.

The Wanderers were a peaceful people but they possessed some weapons and were determined to fight what they saw as murdering aliens. The Luriani, or perhaps Wanderer traders operating among them, provided intelligence which allowed the Wanderers to ambush a detachment of the Vilani fleet, although their own warships were improvised and only marginally effective. Further engagements wore down the Vilani expeditionary force until its survivors were forced to retreat.

The destruction of their fleet terrified the leaders of the Ziru Sirka. Although knowledge of the defeat was strictly controlled and later expunged from the history books, it was decided that these powerful, advanced and warlike aliens could not be permitted to threaten the Grand Empire of Stars. A much greater fleet was assembled and began the methodical reduction of the Wanderers. The Vilani were determined to do it right and built forward bases in what had been unexplored territory. One-by-one the Wanderer worlds were bombarded into rubble.

The Wanderers put up fanatical resistance and rapidly became quite proficient at space combat. Having seen the fate of their first colony they saw no point in surrendering to the murderous Vilani, so each outpost was defended to the last. It was to no avail; the forces ranged against the Wanderers kept increasing as the Vilani, amazed at the tenacity of their foes and dismayed they could not be induced to surrender like sane people, fed more and more ships into the maelstrom.

It became obvious to the Wanderers they were about to be exterminated, so a desperate plan was formulated. Sublight colony ships were hastily built and sent out, taking as much of the surviving Wanderer population with them as possible. These were joined by the few jump-capable vessels that could be spared. No records remain of the direction taken by these ships but it is likely they went to trailing or rimward, directly away from the Vilani threat.

Some Wanderer vessels were lost en route. It may be that some reached distant safety only to fade and die in alien surroundings, while others may fly ever onward, loaded with dead colonists aboard failed low berths. Some found sanctuary, where they built up their population, reconstructed their technological base and created new worldships. As the Long Night settled in, the Wanderers hid from a Ziru Sirka that had fallen long ago.

Sanctuary was not home. Many of the escape ships lost records and the Wanderers were unsure of the location of their ancient home. They had a vague idea where it might be found and eventually, some of the Wandering People set out to return to their old domain. They found the Grand Empire of Stars gone, replaced by a Third Imperium that seemed saner and more friendly. No-one remembered them. Even their friends, the Luriani, had no idea this was a recontact and not a first meeting. They did speak of a year of woe, in which Vilani agents did something in Luriani space and of curious gaps in their knowledge.

The Wandering People had returned to their home space as strangers. Most of those they encountered were friendly enough but they had been almost wiped out by humans for no reason they could understand. The Wanderers are not willing to risk annihilation a second time. They keep their mission secret, gathering information thorough trade and commerce. Their worldships crawl across the region, sending out jump-capable scouts and traders. No-one knows their secret agenda, nor even that they have one. Their goal is to find and reclaim their ancestral home, and it is essential they do. Without their home, the Wanderers face spiritual and perhaps actual extinction.

The Wandering People do not reveal much about their religious or spiritual beliefs to outsiders. Human experts are aware the Wanderers consider all sentient life to possess a spirit or soul, and that upon death this spirit is ‘led home’ by an empowered religious object. What they do not know is that Wanderers believe if their souls are not led home, they linger, suffering, and bring bad luck upon those still living.

The empowered religious object in this case is a piece of rock, ceremonially inscribed, from the homeworld of the Wanderers. This is the object that should reside in the sacred pouch carried by their priests. However, almost all Wanderer communities have lost their homestone (as it is known), and are thus surrounded by the unquiet spirits of thousands of years, which remain, tormented, among their living descendants.

There are two factions within Wanderer religion. One group refers to itself as the seeking people; using a word that translates roughly as ‘those who remain true to the wandering generation’. They have no homestones and are served by a caste of

impoverished priests, whose sacred pouches are empty but for an inscribing device used to make a piece of homeworld rock holy.

The other communities do have homestones but these are not from the original homeworld. They are either from a colony in Ley or one of the worlds the Wanderers fled to in ages past. Their priests wear their full regalia and carry a properly inscribed homestone but they are referred to by the seeking people as 'they who became lost'. The seeking people believe the false homestones lead the souls of the dead to a hell or similar bad place. A member of the seeking people would be terrified at being anywhere near such a false priest, since upon death they would be taken to the wrong place.

Both groups need to find the homeworld, to obtain true homestones or reconsecrate the ones they have so the dead can go to the right place, and more importantly so both halves of the Wanderer religion can be reconciled. Those who became lost do not recognise the difference between the two factions, and refer to both as 'The Wandering People' or sometimes 'The Displaced People'. Wanderers do not discuss their religion or the importance of their spiritual home with anyone.

The Wanderers known as 'crazies' or 'rogues' are considered holy seekers by mainstream Wanderer society. Their numbers are increasing as the centuries go by, a sure sign there is something badly wrong with the souls of the Wandering People. Crazies are respected but not entirely trusted, as holy madmen are still madmen when it comes down to it. They have many goals but, like all Wanderers, they long for the day when the souls of the dead can be led home into the stones of their homeworld to join the ancestors. On that day, all the crazies will become sane. They will have redeemed their species and can take their reward; being able to re-join Wanderer society as normal people and enjoy the community of their species.

The Wanderers' search for their homeworld is ongoing in the background of other events in the region. They may commission Travellers to help them search or investigate somewhere, although they are unlikely to explain what they are looking for or why. Alternatively, the Travellers may encounter the same bands of Wanderers or individual crazies in various places and realise they are looking for something. The Wanderers will affect the situation in the Trailing Frontier another way, too. Those who carried out the atrocities of the Year of Woe served the Sharurshid megacorporation, as did the officials who misrepresented the situation in Ley and inadvertently triggered a genocidal war. Sharurshid would prefer this secret remained buried.

Keeping the skeletons in the closet is the task of an organisation known as Zulii Aana Korameshh, or ZAK. Their name translates in Galanglic as Keepers of Dark (or deep, or difficult, depending on the inflection) Secrets. ZAK is a secret branch of the Sharurshid megacorporation's security service. Its existence is unknown to more than 99% of the firm's employees and senior officials. Its personnel all have cover jobs as managers, workers and contractors, and most do not know what secrets they keep. They simply stand ready for the day when they are ordered to intimidate or kill someone. They never ask why and many believe all they are doing is preserving the security of the megacorp. Some are actually recruited under the pretence that they are deep-cover Imperial agents and believe they are acting on orders from the highest Imperial authorities.

ZAK does not keep records of the secrets it guards, although some personnel have gleaned some facts and senior coordinators have access to the truth in order to direct their operations more effectively. No regional ZAK office knows about matters protected by other regional branches. The biggest secret guarded is the near-extermination of the species now known as the Wanderers and since these beings have returned to Imperial Space, ZAK has been highly active in monitoring them and ensuring others do not stumble upon the secret.

The Ley Sector office of ZAK maintains a close watch on scientists, journalists and the occasional Ancients hunter poking around the region in search of artefacts or lost history. The Wanderers' worlds were pretty much scrubbed by the Sharurshid fleet but artifacts do turn up from time-to-time which might prove they were resident in the region long ago. One response to such activity is to deflect, offering funding to search a world known to be a dead-end, or to buy up artefacts and quietly make them disappear. If this fails, coercion, intimidation and murder may become necessary and ZAK has access to deniable assets in the form of mercenaries, corsair ships and assassins as well as its own covert-operations personnel. The keepers will always try to use soft options before resorting to radical action that might cause further investigation.

Since the rimward end of Ley is a potential time bomb for Sharurshid, ZAK maintains a presence on many worlds. In some systems these are paid informants

who do not know who they report to or perhaps a lone agent, but the organisation can bring in major assets in an impressively short time, and given the importance of the secret they guard, they are willing to take extreme and even desperate measures if necessary.

The Travellers might fall foul of ZAK even if they know nothing about the Wanderers and their quest. Indeed, it may be that by triggering a ZAK intervention and wondering why there are suddenly secret agents trying to kill them, the Travellers are drawn into unravelling a mystery 6,000 years old, and inflicting enormous damage on the Sharurshid megacorporation's reputation into the bargain.

THE RORYNIAR

According to ancient tradition and wild rumour, Luriani were not the first sophonts to dwell on Daramm. The name given to these earlier inhabitants is Roryniar, a word of unknown origin. Some claim the Roryniar evolved on Daramm, which is unlikely given it is a water world, whilst others claim that Vesaravyn – the planet next to Daramm's primary – was the Roryniar homeworld. Vesaravyn does have a complex ecosystem and would be a better prospect for development of a technological society, but there is little evidence it was inhabited.

According to the Roryniar Lobby, this species developed super-advanced technology even before the Ancients, building outposts across their home system and elsewhere in the sector, before becoming extinct. Hundreds of thousands of years have hidden their works. Adherents of the Roryniar concept point to the large number of sites they say exist as evidence that the Roryniar really did exist. However, it has proven extremely hard to find these sites even when their location is revealed in public databases. It is likely the Roryniar are a wild tale or perhaps a conspiracy theory linking what are in reality unrelated sites belonging to much more humble societies.

THE LORDS OF THUNDER

The Lords of Thunder are not a mystery. Their intentions are quite clear and openly declared. They plan to take control over the whole of Charted Space and kill every single G'naak they encounter. The details are less clear, however. It is almost certain that the Lords of Thunder will attack the Renkard Union within the year. This is a highly significant act as it brings them into open conflict with at least some of the states of Gateway, and establishes a foothold in the sector.

The Renkard Union stands no chance against a concerted assault. Its only hope for survival is the disunity of the K'Kree, coupled with timely and meaningful reinforcements from nearby states. It is likely the Megusard Corporate will assist, although perhaps not directly. The Corporate is already hiring mercenary forces, enabling it to deny responsibility in the event Renkard is overrun quickly. If that happens, Megusard and other local states may try to stall with appeasement and denial of their part in the defence of Renkard. On the other hand, if Renkard puts up a good enough fight other states may decide a line can be drawn and send additional forces.

The Lords of Thunder will not pursue a clear and coherent strategy against the Renkard Union. Even the start of the operation will be muddled as some leaders try to show their worth by attacking sooner than everyone else. In addition to being distributed in time, attacks will be scattered across the whole Union. They are likely to be launched recklessly and against the more habitable worlds where the K'Kree can fight in their preferred style. It is possible a skilled commander on the Renkard side might be able to shift reserves to meet the rain of blows one at a time and actually hold some of the targeted worlds. This has the potential to inspire others to assist and is essential to the survival of the Union, or at least part of it. However, unity of command is unlikely, so the defence may come down to isolated attacks and defensive actions, with some worlds immediately overwhelmed and others untouched.

The imminent war at the trailing edge of Gateway is of great importance to those taking the long view and everyone close to the threatened area. There is a steady movement spinward of those with the resources to relocate and there are rumours the Imperials are quietly assisting. Populations and rich individuals resettled by Imperial ships are required to swear allegiance to a new state wherever they arrive and in many cases these new states are keen to become Imperial clients. It may be the line against the Lords of Thunder is drawn in the Renkard Union, if not then it will likely be in these client states. When the K'Kree advance reaches this point, the Imperium will have to fight or abandon its people. It is not at all clear what the decision will be, nor when it will become necessary. What is certain is that sooner or later the fleets of the Imperium and the Lords of Thunder will clash, probably somewhere in Gateway and definitely within the Trailing Frontier.

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